

AMERICAN LIFE IN LITERATURE

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

In this abridged edition are included ample materials to form the basis of a semester's work in American literature or for a year's work when classes meet only once or twice a week. Forty-seven of the more important writers are represented in this book. The introductory essays have been slightly reduced by omitting materials which have no direct bearing upon selections included in this volume. I have kept intact the full biographical and critical sketches of important authors and have added to these some new bibliographical materials. So far as possible within the limits of space, every feature of the large edition which commended itself to teachers and students has been preserved.

The title of the book—*American Life in Literature*—was chosen to suggest that emphasis is placed upon our literature as an expression of American thought and as a record of American life. One potent reason for studying our own literature is that, if men and women are to live intelligently in this country, they must know their own background in the life and thought of the United States. I have looked for selections which picture our multifarious life in some characteristic manner or give expression to American thinking about American problems. I have looked for selections not only excellent in themselves but also unhackneyed and not too difficult for the undergraduate student. One anthologist tends to inherit from his predecessors old favorites like "A Psalm of Life" and "The Barefoot Boy." I included Longfellow's "A Ballad of the French Fleet" because it seemed to me a better and less hackneyed poem than "The Wreck of the Hesperus." This volume includes some important materials which were not available in 1936, when the anthology first appeared. The most conspicuous instance is the poems of Emily Dickinson, most of which are now out of copyright; but there are others, among them Stephen Vincent Benét's "Litany for Dictatorships." I have included in the abridged edition many of the letters which are found in the larger edition. A letter, as every instructor knows, often gives the student a more vivid impression of an author's personality than can be had from more formal writing. Furthermore, the literary qualities of the letters of Irving, Melville, Lincoln, Mark Twain, and Henry James are great enough to warrant their inclusion in any anthology, quite apart from the light they throw upon the personalities and literary aims of the writers. In the abridged edition the selections from English writers have been omitted in order to represent the more important American writers as fully as possible.

I have included unusually full biographical and critical sketches of more than a dozen major writers. It is impossible to require students to read biographies of all these authors, and the sketches given in reference books often do not effectively serve the teacher's needs.

PREFACE-----

The historical interchapters, which are longer than those which appeared in the 1936 edition, are intended to supply an outline of our literary history as well as the necessary background information about political, economic, social, and cultural developments. There is an added section on Jacksonian democracy and another on Transcendentalism. The account of Transcendentalism is taken primarily from the writings of contemporaries who were in a position to speak from observation and experience. The introductory essays and other materials included serve to emphasize the close connection of our literature with its social, cultural, economic, religious, and political background. However, American literature is not treated merely as a record of changing political and economic thought. *American Life in Literature* is still primarily a collection of writings whose chief value lies in their literary quality. Ideas and movements come and go, but memorable writing remains.

The student should note that dates in italics represent dates of composition; those in Roman, dates of publication. In the introductory essays and biographical sketches I have indicated omissions by the customary three dots (. . .). In the selections themselves, however, where the usual method would often be ambiguous, I have used three hyphens (- - -) instead.

For assistance of many kinds in the preparation of this edition, I am indebted to my son, Jay B. Hubbell, Jr.

J. B. H.

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In the preparation of this book I have incurred many obligations, and I wish to make my acknowledgments to the scholars, teachers, writers, and other persons who have given me suggestions or criticisms and to the publishers and other holders of copyrighted materials who have permitted me to reprint the selections which made this anthology possible.

I

I wish to thank those scholars and teachers who were kind enough to examine the general plan of the new edition of *American Life in Literature* and give me the benefit of their judgment: Miss Miriam R. Small, of Wells College; Messrs. Frederick Abbuhl, of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Gay W. Allen, of New York University; Charles R. Anderson, of Johns Hopkins University; Roy P. Basler, Secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association; Robert W. Bolwell, of George Washington University; Sculley Bradley, of the University of Pennsylvania; Guy A. Cardwell, of the University of Maryland; Wilson O. Clough, of the University of Wyoming; Oral S. Coad, of the New Jersey College for Women; Charles H. Foster, of Grinnell College; James D. Hart, of the University of California; Emory Holloway, of Queens College; Theodore Hornberger, of the University of Minnesota; H. H. Hughes, of the Louisiana Polytechnic Institute; Hampton Jarrell, of Winthrop College; G. E. Jensen, of the Connecticut College for Women; Grant C. Knight, of the University of Kentucky; Thomas Ollive Mabbott, of Hunter College; Gregory Paine, of the University of North Carolina; Lyon N. Richardson, of Western Reserve University; Milledge B. Seigler, of the University of South Carolina; Henry Nash Smith, of the University of Minnesota; Floyd Stovall, of the North Texas Teachers College; Francis Wolle, of the University of Colorado; C. C. Walcutt, of Washington and Jefferson College; George F. Whicher, of Amherst College; R. L. Wiggins, of Wesleyan College; Mentor Williams, of Tulane University; and Donald Murray, of Washington Square College, New York University.

My greatest debt is to Professors William Charvat, of the Ohio State University, and Russell Blankenship, of the University of Washington. They have gone through the manuscript of the new edition and have given me extremely valuable suggestions as to materials which should be included or omitted and have saved me from some errors of fact and judgment. They are of course not responsible for shortcomings which may still be evident, but this anthology is a better book than it would have been without their careful scrutiny.

I am in one way or another indebted to several of my Duke University colleagues for assistance with one or both editions of the anthology: Messrs. F. A. G. Cowper, Allan H.

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Finally, I must not close without a general acknowledgment of indebtedness to my students, graduate and undergraduate, and to the fraternity of scholars whose investigations in recent years have done so much to provide teacher and anthologist alike with the full and accurate information which they need.

II

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J. B. H.

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I

THE
COLONIAL
PERIOD

1607 - 1765

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

1607 - 1765

He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. . . . Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.

—CREVECOEUR, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782).

I

In the history of western Europe the discovery of America in 1492 was an event of perhaps equal importance with the Renaissance and the Reformation in opening men's eyes to the nature of the world they lived in and in changing the order of their lives. The modern world was then emerging from the medieval, and it had progressed still further by 1607, when the first permanent English colony was established at Jamestown. The scientific discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo, the philosophical speculations of Bacon, the revival of classical learning, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, and the invention of printing all contributed to the breakdown of the dogmatism and authority which characterized medieval thought in religion and government. The age of chivalry was past, and feudalism was on its way out. A middle class was developing which was more and more to determine the course of events. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in 1620, forces in England were already in motion that would in a quarter of a century result in the dethroning of the King and the establishment of a British Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. It is against such a background as this that one should see the establishment of English colonies in the New World.

The English influence in our history is a deep and long-continued one, but the Americans who fought the War for Independence are hardly to be described as English. "Contrary to a widespread belief," writes Arthur M. Schlesinger in *New Viewpoints in American History*, "even the people of the thirteen English colonies were a mixture of ethnic breeds. Indeed, these colonies formed the most cosmopolitan area in the world at that time. . . . A Colonial Dame or a Daughter of the American Revolution might conceivably have nothing but pure Hebrew or French or German blood in her veins." Among the various racial elements were the native Indians, the numerous Negro slaves, the Dutch in New York, the Swedes in New Jersey, Huguenots from France, Highland Scots, and the Scotch-Irish in all

THE COLONIAL PERIOD-----1607-1765

the colonies. There were also the French in the Mississippi Valley and the Spaniards in Florida and Texas, eventually to be incorporated in the new nation. In the late nineteenth century a vast multitude of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe was still further to thin our English blood.

Even in 1775 American civilization was not to be described as purely English; still less is it to be so characterized today. As present-day Europeans view it, our civilization seems rather an extension to the New World of the civilization of western Europe; and it represents for many of them the chief hope that that civilization will survive, even on the continent where it had its beginnings centuries ago.

The American character is the product not only of our European inheritance but also of the New World environment. The immigrant coming to the new land found that if he was to survive he would have to adapt himself to a new and more primitive way of life. How he managed this is suggested by Frederick J. Turner in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History":

"Our early history is the study of European germs developing in an American environment. . . . The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs. . . . The fact is, that here is a new product that is American."

The American character, Turner thought, owed to the frontier experience its striking characteristics: "That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier."

The immigrants who came to America from Britain were not altogether representative of the English population. The selective process had already begun. In general, it was not the well-to-do, the conservative, the satisfied who came, but the poor, the restless, the adventurous, men desirous of change. (In later days men of the same types settled in the West.) The result is seen in an American willingness to try new expedients and in a lack of attachment to old ideas and ways of life. The great bulk of the settlers were from the middle and lower classes in England; there were few aristocrats or intellectuals. Our leaders in consequence came from the middle and lower orders of society. The common man found here opportunities which he would not have had if he had remained in the Old World.

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Nevertheless, except along the border, life in America was democratic only in comparison with life in the Old World. Men brought with them British notions of class distinctions, and they did not readily give them up in Virginia or Massachusetts. The leaders in those two colonies were generally men of property, education, and good family. The great Virginian planters who all but ruled the colony were the sons not of common laborers or indentured servants but of country gentlemen, sea captains, army officers, and merchants who came with capital enough to buy land and set up plantations. In Massachusetts the Puritan leaders included well-to-do and educated country gentlemen like John Winthrop and ministers like John Cotton, who had been educated at Cambridge. They were not plain farmers or humble artisans like the men who settled at Plymouth. The Puritan leaders expected to be treated as gentlemen were treated in England. They had the English notion, too, that important offices in church and state should go to the gentry. In the course of time every colony developed an aristocracy of its own which consisted of men of property, education, and ability belonging to families which had established themselves as superior to the masses. In the South they were usually large-scale planters with many acres tilled by slaves or indentured servants. In New England they were often ministers, sea captains, or merchants. Along with these were the officials who clustered around the royal governor, whose influence was in the direction of keeping up English class distinctions. The Revolution was to displace such men and give a more democratic tone to social and political life.

The Southern planter, whatever his birth, sought as best he could to emulate the virtues and copy the way of life of the English country gentleman. The same ideal had its hold also upon New England merchants and ministers. The now colorless word *gentleman* in those days suggested not the idle parasite of Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* but the Renaissance ideal of the well-rounded man. The American gentleman, whether or not he lived up to his code, never questioned the virtues which that code demanded of him: truth, honor, justice, liberality, courtesy, decorum, hospitality, and the spirit of public service. And even if his chief passion was fox hunting, he knew that literary culture was a desirable thing. The ideal was still strong in Revolutionary times, and there are no finer examples of gentlemen in the old sense than such Revolutionary leaders as Washington and Jefferson. The ideal continued in diminished form through the early nineteenth century. Irving, Emerson, Holmes, and Lowell are examples, and so was Fenimore Cooper, whose *The American Democrat* includes a notable plea for a place for the gentleman in American society. With the growth of the industrial revolution and the destruction of the Southern plantation system, the old ideal has become practically meaningless to the present generation.

Until a century or so ago, the arts and literature developed under the patronage of kings and noblemen. Only the well-to-do and the leisured cared greatly about good music, fine paintings, beautiful houses, or belles-lettres. Our literature, which in the nineteenth century made notable advances, has developed under the patronage of a rapidly widening reading public. It is nevertheless still an open question whether in a democracy artists can find in the public a patron comparable to Maecenas or Lorenzo de' Medici or earn a living without debasing their art by catering to low levels of taste.

II

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one must mark the absence of many things which are now a part of our daily lives. One must forget the numerous products of the inventor and the manufacturer, for the industrial revolution had not yet come to America. There were no steam engines, no locomotives, no steamships. There were no gasoline engines, no automobiles, no airplanes. The use of electric power was as yet undreamed of; there were no telephones, no telegraph, no radio, no electric lights or power. Travel and communication were slow and expensive. Sailing ships took months rather than days to cross the Atlantic, and a voyage to England was a perilous experience which few cared to undertake. Roads were so poor that along the coast and on the larger rivers men frequently went by boat rather than on horseback or in wheeled vehicles. Farm products and imported goods were hauled to and from market in oxcarts or in wagons drawn by horses or mules. The postal system was still in its infancy even after Franklin undertook to reorganize it. Only the hardy ventured on such a journey as Sarah Kemble Knight took when she rode on horseback from Boston to New York in 1704. In the Northern colonies farmers expected every year to be snowbound, like the family described in Whittier's poem.

Some readers, if they were deprived of so many things that go to make the urban American comfortable, would feel that life was hardly worth living. But life reduced to its simplest terms, as many an ex-serviceman now knows from personal experience, is something to be valued. These things are its trappings, not its essence. Moreover, comforts and conveniences, when they are unknown, are not missed. Even on the frontier, where comforts were few, men still had their work, their wives and children, freedom from many restrictions known in more complicated societies, and the hope of better things to come.

As time passed, the level of prosperity and comfort increased, and in the towns and cities near the coast there developed something akin to the settled civilization of English towns. In the mid-eighteenth century Colonial culture reached its peak in such political and social capitals as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Charleston. These were now the home of well-to-do cultivated families who lived in handsome and well-furnished houses. They had gardens and private libraries, and they were able to see plays and to hear good music. Wealth and leisure had made it possible for them to cultivate a taste for literature and the fine arts. The cultural level among Boston ministers, Philadelphia merchants, Virginia tobacco planters, and South Carolina owners of rice plantations was comparatively high. Theirs was, however, a rather unproductive culture, for it was a provincial culture, imitative and derivative. Why, men felt, should they write novels or plays or poems or compose operas or symphonies when so much of the best that Europe had created was available in American cities? A different feeling developed after the Revolution had brought independence. Americans came to demand for themselves a national literature, an American culture.

Until the eighteenth century there was comparatively little intercourse among the various colonies. Before the Revolution each colony looked to England rather than to its sister colonies. In the long Colonial years each colony developed in its own way without much regard for what was happening in the others. When the Revolution came, it proved extremely difficult to induce the thirteen different provinces to unite effectively enough to wage a successful war. Nevertheless, economic and geographic influences tended roughly to

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group the colonies into sections which had much in common. Here we see the beginnings of that sectionalism which has been so marked a characteristic of our history.

In the Southern colonies the great majority of settlers were not Puritans but members of the Church of England; in Maryland there were many Roman Catholics. Soil and climate favored the establishment of large plantations, given over to tobacco, cotton, rice, and indigo and cultivated by the labor of indentured white servants or Negro slaves. Until the late seventeenth century most farms were small and the number of slaves was not large, for the planters preferred white workers and resorted to slaves only when other laborers could not be obtained. In the eighteenth century, however, the plantations grew larger and the slaves more numerous, for only large-scale farming seemed profitable in the tidewater regions; and many small farmers sold out and moved to the uplands. In the South, towns were few and the population was widely scattered, not clustered about churches and schools in villages, as in New England. In Virginia ships came up the James, the York, the Rappahannock, or the Potomac to the planter's wharf and took his hogsheads of tobacco directly to England, where his agent bought the tobacco and sent back to the planter whatever he had ordered. As a result Virginia had no cities and few representatives of the professional classes except ministers and lawyers, and most of the planters were heavily in debt to their English agents. In South Carolina, however, the rivers were too shallow for ocean-going ships; and Charleston, situated at the confluence of the Ashley and Cooper rivers, became a trading center of importance. Until after the Revolution it was one of the four or five largest American cities.

In New England, farming the niggardly and rocky soil was never highly profitable. What should be the rich tidewater belt of this region lies underneath the Atlantic Ocean. The thrifty and resourceful Yankees, however, made the most of their geographical advantages: good harbors, a plentiful supply of timber, water power, and nearness to the fishing grounds off the northeast coast; and they took to fishing, shipbuilding, and commerce, and in the nineteenth century to large-scale manufacturing. "The Yankee," writes Professor S. E. Morison, "was the American Scot. . . . A severe climate, a grudging soil that had to be cleared of boulders as well as trees, and a stern puritan faith dictated the four gospels of education, thrift, ingenuity, and righteousness." New Englanders early took to the sea. The sacred codfish was a symbol of Massachusetts prosperity. The influence of the sea modified the Yankee's provincialism and broadened his Puritan outlook. The sea offered young men a way of escape from the endless sermons of Puritan divines, and it brought them into contact with men of different races and with other religious beliefs. On the frontier, too, the Yankee character was modified by conditions very different from those prevailing in Boston and Providence. The influence of the ministry in New England, however, was greater than in any other section, even in matters of government. As late as 1837 we shall find Emerson referring to the clergy as "more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day." Massachusetts was the first colony to introduce a printing press, to launch a newspaper, and to found a college. Massachusetts was unconsciously laying a foundation for an important school of writers who were to appear in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

The middle colonies were of diverse origins and for a long time had no unity of feeling. New York was for many years a Dutch colony, and Pennsylvania was founded as a refuge for Quakers. Life in these two colonies and in New Jersey and Delaware partook of some

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of the characteristics of both New England and the South. In time this section came nearer the American norm in its way of life and thought and even in its speech than any other except the region beyond the Alleghenies. In the eighteenth century Philadelphia was the largest of American cities and, certainly in Franklin's time, one of the most enlightened.

III

The Virginia and Massachusetts colonies brought with them English concepts of law and government. They put their faith in written charters and constitutions, and they cherished Magna Charta and the English Bill of Rights as well as their Colonial charters. They believed in the supremacy of the judiciary and the right of appeal. They claimed the right of local self-government, and they resented infringement upon their right to levy taxes. The earliest of the Colonial legislative bodies was the Virginia General Assembly, established in 1619. The right to vote was restricted to property holders and in some colonies to church members, but democratic processes were employed in town meetings and religious assemblies. Colonial officeholders, like William Byrd, contested strenuously with the royal governors for what they believed to be their rights. The regicide leader in Hawthorne's "The Gray Champion" is a vivid symbol of New England resistance to oppression. The Colonial leaders were familiar with the democratic ideas of John Milton and other Puritan thinkers, and they cherished the Whig liberalism of the Revolution of 1688 as expounded in John Locke's two treatises on government. When such liberal ideas went out of fashion in the England of George III, Americans still clung to them and embodied them in their appeals to King and Parliament and in their Declaration of Independence.

One must not, however, overrate the democratic tendencies in Colonial life. The great merchants, divines, planters, and government officials were often thoroughly undemocratic. The Boston clergyman, John Cotton, wrote in 1636: "Democracy, I do not conceyve that ever God did ordeyne as a fitt government eyther for church or commonwealth. If the people be governors, who shall be governed? As for monarchy, and aristocracy, they are both of them clearly approved, and directed in scripture, yet so as referreth the soveraigntie to himselfe, and setteth up Theocracy in both, as the best forme of government in the commonwealth, as well as in the church." In 1717, however, a humbler New England minister, John Wise, defended democracy in both church and state as the best preventive of fraud and arbitrary rule. Of democracy he said: "This is a form of Government, which the Light of Nature does highly value, & often directs to as most agreeable to the Just and Natural Prerogatives of Humane Beings." In 1750 a third New England minister, Jonathan Mayhew, boldly contended, like Thoreau a century later, "That no civil rules are to be obeyed when they enjoin things that are inconsistent with the commands of God: All such disobedience is lawful and glorious; particularly, if persons refuse to comply with any *legal establishment of religion*. . . ." As the passages quoted suggest, there was considerable growth in democratic thought between the first settlement and the outbreak of the Revolution.

The Reformation profoundly influenced American as well as English life and thought. Few Puritans came to the Southern colonies; but if we may judge by their laws and by the books in the planters' private libraries, the Virginians were quite as much concerned about religion as the New England Puritans and little more tolerant. In seventeenth-century England and America both the Puritans and their opponents were deeply concerned with reli-

gion and its implications for society and government. In America the percentage of dissenters was far greater than in England, and oppressed religious minorities came to this country from other European nations. Among them were the Quakers, the French Huguenots, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Moravians, and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Although the economic motive bulked very large in the minds of the immigrants, the desire to escape petty persecution was often an equally important incentive. The seventeenth century in Europe saw the beginning of many new religious sects, and the centrifugal process went on in this country. Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were forced for their heretical opinions to take refuge in Rhode Island, for the Puritan clergy would not tolerate heresies which they had left England to get away from. If religious toleration came to be the general practice in the American colonies, it was partly because no one sect was numerous or powerful enough to make its own creed and ritual the law of the land. In *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam* (1647) Nathaniel Ward protested that he hated "Tolerations of divers Religions, or of one Religion in segregant shapes." Whoever endorsed toleration, he thought, was either an atheist, a heretic, or a hypocrite. "He that is willing to tolerate any Religion, or discrepant way of Religion, besides his owne, unlesse it be in matters meerly indifferent, either doubts of his owne, or is not sincere about it." To the modern mind, economic and political heresies seem far more dangerous than differences in religious belief; but in the seventeenth century, when union of church and state was all but universal, men feared to tolerate religious heresies for fear that the whole order of society might be overturned. The great American champion of religious toleration was Roger Williams, whose creed is thus admirably summarized by Charles and Mary Beard:

"In Williams' creed were four cardinal points. First was the doctrine that 'persecution for cause of conscience is most evidently and lamentably contrary to the doctrine of Christ Jesus.' From this simple declaration it followed that 'no one should be bound to worship or to maintain a worship against his own consent.' Williams' third principle was that church and state should be separated, that to limit the choice of civil magistrates to church members was like choosing pilots and physicians according to their schemes of salvation rather than skill in their professions. Finally, the civil magistrate was not to interfere at all in matters of conscience; 'his power extends only to the bodies and goods of men.' "

Some understanding of the nature of Puritanism is essential if one would follow the development of American life and thought, but understanding Puritanism is no easy matter. The Puritan has become a legendary figure. "Time," wrote Emerson in his essay on "History," "dissipates to shining ether the solid angularity of facts. No anchor, no cable, no fences, avail to keep a fact a fact." With the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, Puritanism went out of fashion in England, and the Puritan became the butt of ridicule for such satirists as Samuel Butler, whose *Hudibras* gives a distorted picture. As late as 1826 Sir Walter Scott in *Woodstock* gave the traditional unfavorable picture of Cromwell and other Puritans. The year before, Macaulay in his essay on Milton had attempted to clear away some of the popular misconceptions. But not until Carlyle in 1845 published the letters and speeches of Cromwell was the great Puritan leader vindicated. We know now that among the Puritans were the chief liberal thinkers of the seventeenth century.

In New England the popular conception of the Puritan, although influenced by British

notions, developed somewhat differently. The Puritans were the ancestors of later New Englanders, and so they were often magnified into greater men than they were. On the other hand, the Unitarian revolt against the theology of the Puritans led men to stress their less likable traits. Emerson, Holmes, and Parkman had little interest in the Puritans. Something of both attitudes is to be seen in Hawthorne's stories of Puritan New England. His picture, however, is too simple to be accurate. His Puritans are all of a type: stern, harsh, strong fanatics preoccupied with ferreting out secret sins. He plays up the stern John Endicott and ignores the gentler, more human William Bradford and John Winthrop. In the twentieth century, which is not much concerned with fine distinctions, the term *Puritanism* (or *puritanism*) has been widely employed as a synonym for narrowness and intolerance. It is necessary to remind ourselves that the Puritans were not a single type and that they were as human as other people. There were Puritans who loved good music, fine clothes, imported wines, and good poetry. They were a sturdy race and they left a deep imprint upon the character of their descendants. The Puritan movement found its loftiest expression in the poems of John Milton, *The Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan, and in this country in the religious writings of Edward Taylor and Jonathan Edwards. The movement also left a heritage which has influenced the thought, behavior, and literary expression of Americans down into our own time.

The Puritan differed from the Anglican chiefly in his attitude toward the Bible. Both regarded it as the inspired word of God, but for the Puritan it was a complete code of laws to be implicitly obeyed. For the Anglican, the Bible was a guide which gave the broad principles of religion but did not lay down minute rules for guidance in matters of detail. The Anglican attached more importance to reason and the law of nature than did the Puritan. He considered the Puritan a narrow-minded literalist, much as the religious liberal of today views the Fundamentalist. The Puritans thought they had found in the Scriptures a perfect plan of church organization, and they proposed to put it into operation in New England when they could not secure its adoption in the mother country. But reformation in the organization and ritual of the Church of England brought the Puritans into politics, for in a nation where there was union of church and state a religious question was also a political question. The Puritan desire for reform led Parliament into conflict not only with the Archbishop of Canterbury but with the King as well. The Puritans differed from the Anglicans on important points of doctrine. Their theology was indebted to that of John Calvin and his Scottish follower, John Knox. The Calvinist view of human nature has long been out of fashion, and yet it bears a resemblance to that held by economic determinists and psychologists of the twentieth century. Human nature no longer seems so wholly good as it seemed to Rousseau, Jefferson, Channing, and Emerson.

IV

In the eighteenth century, which was the Age of Enlightenment, many persons in the educated classes were Deists. Although in their beliefs the Deists were not very unlike the Unitarians, they were not a church or an organized society, and they were to be found both inside and outside most denominations. In America many of the Revolutionary leaders, like Adams, Franklin, and Jefferson, were either Deists or in sympathy with the movement.

Thomas Paine and Ethan Allen were militant Deists who vigorously attacked the beliefs of the orthodox and indulged in amateur higher criticism of the Bible.

Deism, like most other movements and ideas, is difficult to define with exactness, for it varied from decade to decade and from person to person, but its general nature is not difficult to grasp. It was in part a reaction against Puritanism, and on its intellectual side it owed much to discoveries of the scientists. As Emerson was later to phrase it, Copernicus had "destroyed the pagan fictions of the Church, by showing mankind that the earth on which we live was not the centre of the Universe . . . but a little scrap of a planet, rushing round the sun in our system, which in turn was too minute to be seen at the distance of many stars which we behold. Astronomy taught us our insignificance in nature; showed that our sacred as our profane history had been written in gross ignorance of the laws, which were far grander than we knew; and compelled a certain extension and uplifting of our views of the Deity and his Providence." The science of Sir Isaac Newton and the philosophy of John Locke glorified reason rather than intuition. Science had revealed a universe of unimaginable dimensions governed by immutable laws. The Deity, now seen as the Great First Cause, began to seem almost as remote from the little earth as the gods of Lucretius. The Deists glorified both reason and nature and looked askance at emotion and intuition. They found much truth in all the great religions, but the Bible was for them, as for Emerson, only one of the great religious scriptures. Unlike the Puritans, the Deists viewed the world with an attitude of rather shallow optimism, well expressed in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. After the American Revolution Deism in this country quickly went out of fashion; it was always vigorously attacked by the evangelical denominations.

By 1765 our Colonial culture had reached its peak in such centers as Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston. It was to be considerably disrupted by the Revolutionary War and the emigration of Tory families to England and Canada. It was a culture that existed primarily for the benefit of the leisured and the well-to-do. Not until after the Revolution was there any serious effort to raise the cultural level of the mass of the population. It was a culture closely modeled on that of England, and it was in consequence comparatively unproductive. The colonists imported what they wanted in the way of literature and the fine arts, but did little to encourage native artists and writers.

Interest in education was fairly widespread, but there was no general tax-supported system of public schools, even in Massachusetts. In the grammar schools the chief emphasis was upon reading, writing, and arithmetic. The earliest colleges, Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary, were founded primarily to educate men for the ministry and other professions. There were no state universities or municipal colleges or colleges designed to train teachers for the lower schools. Education was generally regarded as the primary responsibility of the parents and not of the state. Few but the well-to-do were able to send their sons to college. The Southern colonies were slower to found colleges, but they sent a larger number of their young men to England to be educated. William Byrd, like his friend Benjamin Lynde, Chief Justice of Massachusetts, studied law at the Middle Temple in London. In the Colonial colleges mathematics and the ancient classics bulked large, but the training given young collegians was not ill adapted to future ministers, lawyers, and physicians or even to the sons of the great planters. The education which the Revolutionary statesmen received admirably fitted them for the part they had to play in the struggle for independence.

The number of newspapers founded in the eighteenth century suggests that the number of persons able to read was considerable. Owing partly to the difficulty of obtaining news, Colonial newspapers published more literary material than did their successors. The most important literary type represented is the familiar essay. Many of the essays printed in the newspapers were borrowed from the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the many later English series of periodical essays, but a considerable number were written in the colonies. The popularity of Addison and Steele was immense, and Benjamin Franklin was not unique in his desire to learn to write like the author of whom Samuel Johnson said: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

The first printing press in the English colonies was set up in Cambridge in 1639, three years after the founding of Harvard College. The *Boston News-Letter*, established in 1704, was the first newspaper to continue beyond a single issue. There were printing presses in New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland before 1700 and both printing presses and newspapers in all the colonies before 1775. A few magazines were established in Northern cities before the Revolution, but their literary importance is not great. The printer, it should be noted, was usually not only the editor and proprietor of a newspaper but also a book-seller and sometimes a postmaster as well. Since he frequently advertised his wares in his paper, we often find extensive lists of books imported from England which he expected to sell. These indicate that in the towns in which there were printers one could buy not only new books but ancient and modern classics as well.

Colonial Americans read much the same books as those which Englishmen were reading. There was naturally a slight lag in literary fashions, as there was in districts in England at a distance from London. Away from the American seaboard the lag was much greater, and books were much less plentiful than in Boston and Annapolis. Inventories of private libraries indicate that books were common in the homes of educated planters, ministers, lawyers, and merchants. Here are of course the ancient classics, now found frequently in translation, the Bible and other religious books, histories, law books, books of travel, plays, novels, poems, and bound volumes of essays. Apart from Shakespeare and a few other writers, English literature in 1750 is represented by such later writers as Dryden, Pope, the Restoration dramatists, Addison, Steele, Swift, Richardson, and Fielding. French literature is often found both in the original and in translation, but other modern literatures are very scantily represented. Among books common in libraries of all kinds are John Locke's two treatises on government, Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, and other books embodying the liberal political ideas of the Revolution of 1688. It is from such books as these that Adams, Jefferson, and the Virginia Lees derived their theories of government.

V

American literature, like that of Russia, is one of the youngest of the literatures of the world; and it is only one of several literatures written in the English language, including those of Eire, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Our literature began as a very minor branch of English literature, and it was slow to take on American characteristics and become an expression of distinctively American life and thought. It is, consequently, difficult to say just when it ceased to be a branch of English literature and became a sepa-

rate national literature. When Jamestown was founded, Elizabethan literature was at its peak; but, as Gamaliel Bradford once put it, "When the settlers came to this country, they brought English morals and religion, they left the Shakespearean imagination behind." They left behind them also the classes which were producing great literature. In the beginning our writers, few of whom had real talent, merely followed the literary fashions of the mother country, and too often they failed to choose the best British models. We shall find Anne Bradstreet imitating Joshua Sylvester rather than John Milton, and Cotton Mather modeling his prose not on that of John Dryden but on some of his clumsy and verbose predecessors. Only very slowly did Americans master the art of writing and learn to write with individuality and skill. In the eighteenth century, however, if not before, we find writing which seems genuinely American. It appears less often in formal literary expression than in such informal writing as Sarah Kemble Knight's account of her journey from Boston to New York in 1704. In a letter to V. F. Calverton, May 14, 1931, Gamaliel Bradford wrote:

"It has always seemed to me that here lies the real American literature, in the letters, diaries, personal narratives, which record the real experience of the race from the beginning. This stream widens and deepens with growing power and significance, so that the great American literature of the eighteenth century is the correspondence of Washington, Franklin, the Adamses, and a dozen others. Following out this idea, I should show how the genuine Americanism creeps in through all the false literary artificiality, even in men like Longfellow and Holmes and Lowell, much more in Hawthorne and Cooper and Emerson. The stream of real Americanism is there."

Something American is evident in the work of our three most important early writers, William Byrd, Jonathan Edwards, and Benjamin Franklin, who are worthy to be set not far below the classic prose writers of eighteenth-century England.

The motive which induced the Colonial American to take his pen in hand was seldom the desire to write literature in any narrow sense of the word. The purpose was primarily utilitarian. What we find him writing is not novels, short stories, plays, or poems written for their own sake (although there was much verse) but sermons, histories, biographies, controversial pamphlets, diaries, letters, and travelers' accounts. Often there was no thought of publication, and much of the best Colonial writing was not published until after the Revolution, some of it not until the twentieth century. Among the finest Colonial writing, especially in the Southern colonies, were expressions of resentment at British misconceptions of American life. It was such a motive that induced Robert Beverley to write his *History of Virginia*. There was more writing and publishing in New England than in other sections. Much of it consists of sermons, which seem to have made up a large part of what New Englanders read. There are many fine examples of this obsolescent literary type, but few read them today. The modern reader finds metal more attractive in Sewall's diary and the metaphysical poems of Edward Taylor.

Our Colonial literature is, as we have noted, a minor part of English literature, and cannot of course be fully understood without some knowledge of its English background. Literary fashions were set in London and not in Boston and New York. The artificial prose of Captain John Smith or Nathaniel Ward is better understood if, for instance, one has read Sidney's *Arcadia* and Lyly's *Euphues*; and "Bacon's Epitaph" and the poems of Edward Taylor

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will seem excessively artificial to one who has read nothing by John Donne. With American writers, as with British, we note a marked change in prose style when we come to the eighteenth century. William Byrd and Benjamin Franklin have much in common with Addison, Steele, Defoe, and Swift. They also belong to the Age of Prose and Reason, the age of the essay and the novel, of Deism, and of Neo-Classicism.

WILLIAM BYRD

1674 - 1744

If New England be called a receptacle of Dissenters, and an Amsterdam of religion, Pennsylvania the nursery of Quakers, Maryland the retirement of Roman Catholics, North Carolina the refuge of runaways, and South Carolina the delight of buccaneers and pirates, Virginia may be justly esteemed the happy retreat of true Britons and true Churchmen. . . .

—HUGH JONES, *The Present State of Virginia* (1724).

The Virginia aristocracy, of which William Byrd II was a distinguished representative, was largely of native growth. Says John Spencer Bassett, Byrd's editor and biographer:

"The aristocratic form of Virginia society . . . proceeded from economic, social, and political causes. On its economic side it was supported by land and servitude; on its social side it was sustained by the ideals, and somewhat by the blood, of the English country gentlemen; on its political side it was fostered by a system of appointments to office which left the least room for a democracy. In the century which preceded the Revolution it was in its greatest vigor. Like all aristocracies which are not frequently renewed from outside sources, it at length went into decay; but in the century of its vigor it produced a type of leadership which few other communities have equaled."

Byrd's father, William Byrd I, was a Virginia official, trader, and landed proprietor. The son was educated in Europe. He was in England by 1681. In 1689–1690 he was in Holland, which he did not like. Returning to England, he studied law at the Middle Temple in London. In 1696 he returned to Virginia and was elected to the General Assembly. He was in England as a colonial agent from 1697 to 1705. His father's death, on December 4, 1704, brought him back to Virginia, where he succeeded his father as receiver-general and in 1709 became a member of the Council, which then practically governed the colony. In 1706 he married Lucy Parke, daughter of General Daniel Parke. Somewhat later he assumed her father's debts, which troubled him thereafter for many years. In 1710 arrived the new Governor, Alexander Spotswood, who in trying to curb the power of the Council stirred Byrd and others to opposition. Byrd spent the years 1715–1726 in England, partly at least in combating Spotswood. In 1724 he married Maria Taylor—his first wife had died in 1716. After his return to Virginia in 1726, Byrd visited England no more. He lived the life of a

country gentleman at his beautiful estate of Westover on the banks of the James. He built up one of the largest libraries in the colonies, some 3500 volumes. He wrote to a London friend: "A Library, a Garden, a Grove, and a Purling Stream are the Innocent Scenes that divert our Leisure." His life, however, was not altogether the peaceful life he implies. He helped to survey the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728, and the "Northern Neck" in Virginia in 1736. He owned at the time of his death in 1744 (also the year of Alexander Pope's death) not less than 179,440 acres of land. At the time of his death he was president of the Virginia Council of State.

Byrd is one of the major figures in our Colonial literature, but until recent years literary historians were slow to recognize this fact. *A History of the Dividing Line* was not published until 1841, almost a century after his death, when Edmund Ruffin brought out *The Westover Manuscripts* in Petersburg, Virginia. Books printed in the South in those days of controversy over slavery were little read outside the state in which they were printed. It was twelve years before Washington Irving heard of the book. The first scholarly treatment of Byrd appeared in 1901 when John Spencer Bassett published *The Writings of "Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia Esq."* This edition, however, does not contain *A Secret History of the Line*, which Professor William Kenneth Boyd brought out in 1929. In 1940 Professors R. C. Beatty and W. J. Mulloy published *William Byrd's Natural History of Virginia*, retranslated into English from a Swiss colonization pamphlet to which Byrd had contributed. In the same year Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling published *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*, and in 1942 Maude H. Woodfin and Mrs. Tinling published *Another Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1739-1741: With Letters & Literary Exercises*. The letters and "characters" in *Another Secret Diary* are an important addition to the Byrd canon. They include an interesting self-portrait, "Inamorato [.] L'Oiseaux." Byrd's diary lacks the literary qualities of Samuel Pepys's famous work, but it has considerable importance for the Virginia historian and it throws new light upon the character of its author.

Unlike most Americans of his time, Byrd was educated in England and lived there many years. He was a contemporary of Addison, Steele, Swift, and Pope; and his best writing has the fine qualities of eighteenth-century English prose. It was an age in which letter writing was considered an art, and Byrd's letters are excellent. His best work, however, is found in *A History of the Dividing Line* and the two shorter pieces: *Journey to the Land of Eden* and *Progress to the Mines*. *A Secret History of the Line* (1929) is considerably shorter than the older version. In it Byrd employs fictitious names and omits the well-known satiric descriptions of North Carolinians. The shorter version, in fact, reveals scandalous conduct by certain Virginia members of the party toward women along the border. Byrd's best claim to fame is found in *A History of the Dividing Line*, which is at once a diary, a travel book, a history, an account of American flora and fauna, and a collection of character portraits. No other American writer before Benjamin Franklin has a literary style comparable to Byrd's.

The best recent account of Byrd's life is found in Louis B. Wright's *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (1940). Further references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

LETTERS

TO SIR HANS SLOANE*

Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) was secretary to the Royal Society (1693-1712) and president of the Royal College of Physicians (1719-1735). He founded a botanic garden in Chelsea. His collections were bought by the nation and placed in the British Museum.

VIRGINIA the 20th of April 1706.

SIR

The news of my Fathers Death hurry'd me so suddenly from England, that I had not time to receive the commands of the Society, or of your Self, so Laborious a member of it. However I think my Self oblig'd to offer my Service by this first opportunity, and should be very ambitious to do any thing for you, that might make me worthy of the honour I have of being of that illustrious Body, that are ever at work for the good of ungrateful mankind.

The country where fortune hast [*sic*] cast my Lot, is a large feild for natural inquirys, and tis much to be lamented, that we have not some people of skil and curiosity amongst us. I know no body here capable of makeing very great discoveries, So that Nature has thrown away a vast deal of her bounty upon Us to no purpose. Here be some men indeed that are call'd Doctors: but they are generally discarded Surgeons of Ships, that know nothing above very common Remedys. They are not acquainted enough with Plants or the other parts of Natural History, to do any Service to the World, which makes me wish that we had some missionary Philosopher, that might instruct us in the many usefull things which we now possess to no purpose.

The infinite deal of business I had since my arrival has not permitted me to furnish my self with many observations upon the country. This may be allowed to be a very reasonable excuse for me, who found all my private affairs in great disorder after having been 8 months without an owner. And besides that, My Lord Treasurer has laid his commands upon me, to pass all my

Fathers public accompts over again, which are of seaventeen years Standing. And I have been wholly employ'd upon that, to the neglect of my own necessary business, that I might be in condition to obey His Lordps commands before the sailing of this Fleet. This certainly will excuse me to the Society for this year, especially when I promise to be as Serviceable as I am able to it the next.

10 There's nothing Vexes me so much as to find in some of your ignorant newspapers, (God forbid I should call the Gazet one of these) that such a ship arriv'd in so many weeks from Virginia, & left the country very healthy. Which last re-
15 marque makes the world believe, that the Country is at other times generally very Sickly. But I can assure you, they do it abundance of wrong, that believe it to be so; for I fancy here be as few diseases as any w[h]ere, and those that we
20 have are justly to be charged upon intemperance, or excessive ill management. Indeed the many Rivers, and the vast quantity of water all over the country incline people now & then to agues, especially at the time of year, when people
25 eat fruit without any other measure than the bigness of their bellys. But as Agues come by taking cold, I set my Country men an example, that will guard 'em from that inconvenience, if they'll have the grace to follow it. I have all the last
30 winter gone once or twice a week into the river, without being discourag'd by frost or Snow, and find so much benefit by that management, that I design always to continue it throughout the year. This hardens me and makes me proofoe
35 against all the sudden turns of weather, that give colds to other people. At first I passt for a madman for this unusual proceeding: but several do now begin in their opinions to be reconcil'd to my method, tho not in their practice. If People
40 would be perswaded to this, twoud Save a world of Jesuits bark,¹ and Starve all our Doctors.

I have herewith sent a small box of the Root, with which the Indians us'd to cure the bite of a Rattle-Snake. And all the Traders which we send several hundreds of miles to traffick with the Indians, find it constantly to cure their horses, when they happen to be bit. I my Self have Servants that have try'd it often, and never knew it miss.

* The letter to Sir Hans Sloane is reprinted, by permission of the editor, from Vol. I, Second Series, of the *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*.

¹ Quinine.

The method is, as soon as ever they perceive either man or horse to be bit, they pound about the quantity 2 roots at most, and give it in water. It soon begins to operate violently by sweat, while the patient lyes panting with the tongue out for 2 or 3 hours together, & then is perfectly well. What is wonderfull in this medicine is, that it has no sensible operation upon any creature that has not been poisoned. Certainly a Plant that has virtue enough to cure so venomous a bite, as that of the Rattle-snake, must be of infinite use in other disasters. I beg the Society woud please to make some experimts with it, because I'm confident it will do great Service in many cases.

Pray do me the favour to let me hear from you, and let me know how the Society flourishes, with a full assurance of the utmost endeavors to promote its advantage by

Sir

Your most faithfull Servt
WILLIAM BYRD

P/S

Since I writ the other side I have discover'd the true Hypoquacuana, of which I send you a Sample. Both the fashion of the Root and the similitude of the operation leave me no doubt that tis the same with that sent from the Spanish West Indies. However pray try it, and give me yours and the Societys opinion of it. I have also sent you the Root which we find a kind of Specifique both for the dry gripes, and the wind-Cholique. In those distempers it never fails to go thro the body, when nothing else will, if taken in a large quantity. I have put up also Some of our assarabbacca which we have of 2 sorts, but this is the best. Be pleas'd to let me know what uses may be made of all these things, that so I may be able to do good with them here, as I hope you will there. When I have more time, I hope I shall be able to do more Service, in the mean while do me the justice to believe, that nobody has better inclinations to promote natural knowledge than my Self, and if you will direct me after what manner I may be most serviceable to the Society & to the common wealth of learning, I will readily obey you. If you have any thing curious there, I should be obliged to you, if you'll please to favour me with the knowledge of it. Be so kind as to send your letters to Mr. Micajah Perry in Leaden-hall Street, and he will carefully convey them to me by the first opportunity. Adieu. Pray send me some Seed of lemmon-thime.

TO JOHN FOX*

John Fox (1686?-1741?), a Virginian, conducted an ephemeral English literary weekly called the *Wanderer* in 1717. From his files he compiled a book entitled *Motto's of the Wanderers* (1718), which he dedicated in fulsome fashion to Byrd, who was in London from 1715 to 1720. Byrd's letter to Fox appears in his handwriting in a copy of the book now in the Harvard Library. See Kenneth Ballard Murdock, "William Byrd and the Virginian Author of *The Wanderer*," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, XVII (1935), 129-136. "It would be interesting," says Professor Murdock, "to know whether his letter ever reached Fox. It is possible that the note was only a first draft, later copied and sent, or that he relented and despatched a somewhat less discouraging reply, along with the guinea as a 'bribe.' Probably, however, he sent the book back to the author, with the note on the fly-leaf. In any case, the letter does credit to Byrd's good sense and modesty, and testifies to his literary taste—for the *Motto's* is indeed 'no extraordinary Performance.'"

TO THE AUTHOR

[1718?]

I must confess my self offended at the liberty you have taken of prefixing my name to your Works, without the ceremony of inquireing whether it would be agreeable. Had you given your self the trouble of asking that civil question, I should have told you with great fredome, that next to appearing on the Title-page of no extraordinary Performance, a man makes the unhappiest figure in the Dedication. But what I have most Reason to complain of on this occasion is that you craftily abuse me by too great a prodigality of commendation. In revenge of this oblique way of reproach the very least I can do is to wish that your Book may have few courteous Readers and those such only as cant discern the wide [di]fference betwixt the glowing Picture and the Original. My servant will bring you a Guinea, which I would intreat you by no means to look upon as an acknowledgment for the favour you have done me, but as a bribe to do it no more. I am

Your humble Servant

W BYRD.

* Reprinted from *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, Vol. XVII, by permission of the editor, Professor Murdock, and the Harvard College Library.

TO CHARMANTE*

The following letter is the last of a series found in Byrd's letter-book. At the time it was written he was in London. His first wife was dead and he had not yet remarried. The closing paragraph was probably added some years later. Charmante has been identified as Lady Elizabeth Lee, a granddaughter of Charles II. In 1731 she married the poet Edward Young, author of *Night Thoughts*.

November 7th, 1722.

I beg the generous Charmante will please to forgive me if I presume to write once more, & that she wont look upon that to be a transgression of her orders, which is only a promise of obedience. Tho I must confess her last orders were very short & Sudden, yet I will prove the intire Regard I have for her by exactly observing them. I will not endeavor to convince her, that the slightest Hint of her Pleasure shall be a Law to me, tho never so disagreeable to myself. But Dear Madame what cou'd provoke you to deliver your commands last night in that odd place? I don't remember I was asking an Alms of you, that you shou'd deny me, like a common Begger, in the street—you know very well you have lately had more opportunity than one of Signifying your Mind to me at your own House. That certainly had been a more proper Place, unless you intended by the Surprize of the onset, to cut off all possibility of Reply. Surely you cou'd not apprehend, I shou'd in the bitterness of my Soul have reproacht you with any Instances of your former Conduct, in case you had attackt me in a Fair Field of Battle. You have been safe from such ungenerous treatment from me, Madam, because I think it very absurd to upbraid a Lady with lesser Favours when I am deserving the greatest. God knows were I capable of finding any fault with you, it shou'd be that your behaviour, instead of being too kind has not been kind enough. But Madam you are safer from any Reproaches from me, than from yourself, & let your treatment of me be never so evil & ungenerous, still my carriage to you shall be unblamable. During my whole address to you, I have behaved with truth & honour & shall always love you too well to do or say anything to your dis-

advantage. I cou'd not injure you Madame for the whole world, nor for what is more valuable than 20 worlds, your dear self, & thats high as honour can go. However if after all you shou'd
5 determine to make me unhappy I will submit to my Hard Fate, without reproaching any thing but my Stars, & in return of your unkind usage shall earnestly pray that everything that is good everything that is properous may befall you. And
10 if ever you marry any other man (Oh dreadful the thought) may he set as just a value upon your fine qualitys & charming Person & take as much pleasure in makeing you happy as I shou'd do: more I'm sure will be impossible. May Sprightly
15 Health and gaiety of Mind, may full content and all the joys resulting from Virtue & honour attend you to the end of your days. Provided my dearest Charmante is thus completely blest it matters not what becomes of her unfortunate Humble Servant.
20

These Passionate Billets were writ to a Lady who had more charms than Honour more wit than discretion. In the beginning she gave the writer of them the plainest marks of her Favour. He did not hint his passion to her but spoke it openly and confirmed it with many a tender squeeze of the hand, which she suffered with the Patience of a Martyr. Nay that she might have no doubt of his Intentions He put the question to her in the plainest terms, which she seem'd to agree to by a Modest Silence & by great encouragements for more than a month afterwards. She saw him every day, received his Letters, & fed
25 his Flame by the gentlest behaviour in the world 'til at last of a sudden, with-out any Provocation on his part, she grew *Resty* & in a moment she turnd all her Smiles into Frowns, & all his Hopes into Despair. Whether this sudden change was caused by private scandal she had received about Him, or from pure Inconstancy of temper, He cant be sure. The first is not unlikely because he had a rival, that had no hopes of success openly, & therefore it might be necessary to work under-ground and blow him by a Mine. This suspicion is confirmed a little by the Rivals marrying her afterwards, who was then poor, that tis likely the good natured woman might wed him out of charity—especially as at that time he was so unhealthy
40 that he stood more in need of a nurse than a Wife. She did not choose him for his beauty & length of chin 'tho possibly she might for those
50

* The letter to Charmante is reprinted, by permission of the editor, from the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*.

pure morals which recommended him to his grace of W— for a companion. But if after all she did not marry him for his virtue neither, then it must have been for the worst quality any husband can have—for his wit. That, I own he has his share of, yet so overcharged and encumbered with words that he does more violence to the ear than a ring of bells; for, if he had never so sharp a wit, a wife may be sure the edge of it will be turned against herself mostly. - - -

TO LORD EGMONT*

This letter is addressed to the first president of the trustees of the new colony of Georgia.

[VIRGINIA, *July 12, 1736.*]

... Your Lord^{ps} opinion concerning Rum and Negros is certainly very just, and your excluding both of them from your Colony of Georgia will be very happy; tho' with Respect to Rum, the Saints of New England I fear will find out some trick to evade your Act of Parliament. They have a great dexterity at palliating a perjury so well as to leave no taste of it in the mouth, nor can any people like them slip through a penal statute. They will give some other Name to their Rum, which they may safely do, because it gos by that of Kill-Devil in this country from its baneful qualitys. A watchfull Eye must be kept on these foul Traders or all the precautions of the Trustees will be in vain.

I wish my Lord we could be blest with the same Prohibition. They import so many Negros hither, that I fear this Colony will some time or other be confirmed by the Name of New Guinea. I am sensible of many bad consequences of multiplying these Ethiopians amongst us. They blow up the pride, and ruin the Industry of our White People, who seeing a Rank of poor Creatures below them, detest work for fear it should make them look like Slaves. Then that poverty which will ever attend upon Idleness, disposes them as much to pilfer as it dos the Portuguese, who account it much more like a Gentleman to steal, than to dirty their hands with Labour of any kind.

Another unhappy Effect of Many Negros is the necessity of being severe. Numbers make them insolent, and then foul Means must do what fair

will not. We have however nothing like the Inhumanity here that is practiced in the Islands, and God forbid we ever should. But these base Tempers require to be rid with a tort [taut] Rein, or they will be apt to throw their Rider. Yet even this is terrible to a good naturd Man, who must submit to be either a Fool or a Fury. And this will be more our unhappy case, the more Negros are increast amongst us.

But these private mischeifs are nothing if compared to the publick danger. We have already at least 10,000 Men of these descendants of Ham fit to bear Arms, and their Numbers increase every day as well by birth as Importation. And in case there should arise a Man of desperate courage amongst us, exasperated by a desperate fortune, he might with more advantage than Catiline kindle a Servile War. Such a man might be dreadfully mischeivous before any opposition could be formed against him, and tinge our Rivers as wide as they are with blood. besides the Calamity which would be brought upon us by such an Attempt, it woud cost our Mother Country many a fair Million to make us as profitable as we are at present.

It were therefore worth the consideration of a British Parliament, My Lord, to put an end to this unchristian Traffick of makeing Merchandize of Our Fellow Creatures. At least the farthar Importation of them into our Our [*sic*] Colonys should be prohibited lest they prove as troublesome and dangerous everywhere, as they have been lately in Jamaica, where besides a vast expense of Mony, they have cost the lives of many of his Majesty's Subjects. We have mountains in Virginia too, to which they may retire as safely, and do as much mischeif as they do in Jamaica. All these matters duly considerd, I wonder the Legislature will Indulge a few ravenous Traders to the danger of the Publick safety, and such Traders as woud freely sell their Fathers, their Elder Brothers, and even the Wives of their bosomes, if they could black their faces and get anything by them.

I entirely agree with your Lord^p in the Detestation you seem to have for that Diabolical Liquor Rum, which dos more mischeif to Peoples Industry and morals than any thing except Gin and the Pope. And if it were not a little too Poetical, I should fancy, as the Gods of Old were said to quaff Nectar, so the Devils are fobbd off with Rumm. Tho' my Dear Country Men woud think

* Reprinted from the *American Historical Review*, Vol. I, by permission of the editor.

this unsavory Spirit much too Good for Devils, because they are fonder of it than they are of their Wives and Children, for they often sell the Bread out of their mouths, to buy Rumm to put in their own. Thrice happy Georgia, if it be in the power of any Law to keep out so great an enemy to Health Industry and Vertue! The new Settlers there had much better plant Vineyards like Noah, and get drunk with their own Wine. . . .

TO FRANKY OTWAY

The boy to whom this letter was addressed was the son of Colonel Francis Otway, who had married a sister of Mrs. Byrd. "Your Couzen Billy" was William Byrd III.

WESTOVER the 16th of February 1740.

I am not a little delighted with my dear Godsons Letter, writ in so plain a Hand, that he that runs might read it, & old Parr at an Hundred and Fifty might have conned it over with-out Spectacles. You being, Sir, so mighty glad that you were got to Westminster School was perhaps

because it was a new thing, & would help you to abundance of Play Fellows. But if you continue in the same note next year, I shall have good Hopes of you, that you will make good use of your Time. Be sure never let it be said, that your Back, is forct to suffer for the Defects of your Head & if you should ever come to ride the Still Horse, don't let it be on any account of your Book, but for some Sprightly action, or gaiety of Heart. Your Couzen Billy threshes hard at his Studys, for fear you should pose Him, when He comes to England. So many of our youngsters have dyed lately of the Small Pox there, that his Mother, would be in agonys to send Him very soon, However when he does come, you will be so good as to shew Him the Lions, & introduce Him into other good Company. In the meantime I hope you will constantly correspond by Letter & thereby become acquainted & be as Dear Friends, as if you had played Truant & robbed Orchards together an Hundred Times. Adieu my Dear boy, may you grow in Grace, and in Learning & be an ornament to your Country, & Comfort to your Parents, & a Pleasure to your aff Uncle & God Father.

THE HISTORY OF THE DIVIDING LINE (1841)

[March] 25. [1728] The Air was chill'd this Morning with a Smart North-west Wind, which favour'd the Dismalites in their Dirty March. They return'd by the Path they had made in coming out, and with great Industry arriv'd in the Evening at the Spot where the Line had been discontinued.

After so long and laborious a Journey, they were glad to repose themselves on their couches of Cypress-bark, where their sleep was as sweet as it wou'd have been on a Bed of Finland Down.

In the mean time, we who stay'd behind had nothing to do, but to make the best observations we cou'd upon that Part of the Country. The Soil of our Landlord's Plantation, tho' none of the best, seem'd more fertile than any thereabouts, where the Ground is near as Sandy as the Desarts of Affrica, and consequently barren. The Road leading from thence to Edenton, be-

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE LINE (1929) *

25. The Air was chill'd with a N. Wester which favour'd our Dismalites who enter'd the Desert very early. It was not so kind to Meanwell who unreasonably kick't off the Bed Clothes, & catch't An Ague. We killed the Time, by that great help to disagreeable Society, a Pack of Cards. Our Landlord had not the Good Fortune to please Firebrand with our Dinner, but surely when People do their best, a reasonable Man wou'd be satisfy'd. But he endeavour'd to mend his Entertainment by making hot Love to Ruth, who wou'd by no means be charm'd either with his Perswasion, or his Person. While the Master was employ'd in making Love to one Sister, the man made his Passion known to the other, Only he was more boisterous, & employ'd force, when

* The selections from *The Secret History* are reprinted by permission of Professor W. K. Boyd and the North Carolina Historical Commission.

ing in distance about 27 Miles, lies upon a Ridge call'd Sandy-Ridge, which is so wretchedly Poor that it will not bring Potatoes.

The Pines in this Part of the country are of a different Species from those that grow in Virginia: their bearded Leaves are much longer and their Cones much larger. Each Cell contains a Seed of the Size and Figure of a black-ey'd Pea, which, Shedding in November, is very good Mast for Hogs, and fattens them in a Short time.

The smallest of these Pines are full of Cones, which are 8 or 9 Inches long, and each affords commonly 60 or 70 Seeds. This Kind of Mast has the Advantage of all other, by being more constant, and less liable to be nippt by the Frost, or Eaten by the Caterpillars. The Trees also abound more with Turpentine, and consequently yield more Tarr, than either the Yellow or the White Pine; And for the same reason make more durable Timber for building. The Inhabitants hereabouts pick up Knots of Lightwood in Abundance, which they burn into tar, and then carry it to Norfolk or Nansimond for a Market. The Tar made in this method is the less Valuable, because it is said to burn the Cordage, tho' it is full as good for all other uses, as that made in Sweden and Muscovy.

Surely there is no place in the World where the Inhabitants live with less Labour than in N Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People.

Indian Corn is of so great increase, that a little Pains will Subsist a very large Family with Bread, and then they may have meat without any pains at all, by the Help of the Low Grounds, and the great Variety of Mast that grows on the Highland. The Men, for their Parts, just like the Indians, impose all the Work upon the poor Women. They make their Wives rise out of their Beds early in the Morning, at the same time that they lye and Snore, till the Sun has run one third of his course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open Air; tho', if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether

he cou'd not succeed by fair means. Tho' one of the men rescu'd the poor Girl from this violent Lover; but was so much his Friend as to keep the shamefull Secret from those, whose Duty it wou'd have been to punish such Violations of Hospitality. Nor was this the only one this disorderly fellow was guilty of, for he broke open a House where our Landlord kept the Fodder for his own use, upon the belief that it was better than what he allow'd us. This was in compliment to his Master's Horses I hope, & not in blind obedience to any order he receiv'd from him.

they had best go and take a Small Heat at the Hough: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard, with their Arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat. 5

To speak the Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives. 10

26. Since we were like to be confin'd to this place, till the People return'd out of the Dismal, twas agreed that our Chaplain might Safely take a turn to Edenton, to preach the Gospel to the Infidels there, and Christen their Children. He was accompany'd thither by Mr. Little, One of the Carolina Commissioners, who, to shew his regard for the Church, offer'd to treat Him on the Road with a Fricassee of Rum. They fry'd half a dozen Rashers of very fat Bacon in a Pint of Rum, both which being disht up together, serv'd the Company at once for meat and Drink. 15

Most of the Rum they get in this Country comes from New England, and is so bad and unwholesome, that it is not improperly call'd "Kill-Devil." It is distill'd there from forreign molasses, which, if Skilfully manag'd, yields near Gallon for Gallon. Their molasses comes from the same country, and has the name of "Long Sugar" in Carolina, I suppose from the Ropiness of it, and Serves all the purposes of Sugar, both in their Eating and Drinking. 20

When they entertain their Friends bountifully, they fail not to set before them a Capacious Bowl of Bombo, so call'd from the Admiral of that name. This is a Compound of Rum and Water in Equal Parts, made palatable with the said long Sugar. As good Humour begins to flow, and the Bowl to Ebb, they take care to replenish it with Shear Rum, of which there always is a Reserve under the Table. But such Generous doings happen only when that Balsam of Life is plenty; for they have often such Melancholy times, that neither Land-graves nor Casicks can procure one drop for their Wives, when they ly in, or are troubled with the Colick or Vapours. Very few in this Country have the Industry to plant Orchards, which, in a Dearth of Rum, might supply them with much better Liquor. 25 30 35 40 45 50

26. I persuaded Meanwell¹ to take a Vomit of Ipocoacana which workt very kindly; I took all the care of him I cou'd, tho' Firebrand was so unfriendly as not to step once up Stairs to visit him. I also gave a Vomit to a poor Shoemaker that belong'd to my Landlord, by which he reap't great benefit. Puzzlecause made a Journey to Edenton, & took our Chaplain with him to preach the Gospel to the Infidels of that Town, & to baptize some of their Children. I began to entertain with my Chocolate, which every body commended, but only he that commends nothing that don't belong to himself. In the Evening I took a Solitary walk, that I might have Leizure to think on my absent Friends, which I now grew impatient to see. Orion stuck as close to his Patron Firebrand, as the Itch does to the Fingers of many of his Country Folks.

¹ The names in this paragraph are all fictitious. Dr. Boyd identifies "Meanwell" and "Firebrand" as William Dandridge and Richard Fitz-William, Virginia commissioners. "Puzzlecause" is Edward Moseley, one of the North Carolina commissioners; and "Orion," one of the Virginia surveyors. In *The Secret History* Byrd refers to the Virginia chaplain, the Reverend Peter Fountain (or Fontaine), as "Dr. Humdrum."

The Truth is, there is one Inconvenience that easily discourages lazy People from making This improvement: very often, in Autumn, when the Apples begin to ripen, they are visited with Numerous Flights of paraqueets, that bite all the Fruit to Pieces in a moment, for the sake of the 5
 Kernels. The Havock they make is Sometimes so great, that whole Orchards are laid waste in Spite of all the Noises that can be made, or Mawkins that can be drest up, to fright 'em away. These 10
 Ravenous Birds visit North Carolina only during the warm Season, and so soon as the Cold begins to come on, retire back towards the Sun. They rarely Venture so far North as Virginia, except in a very hot Summer, when they visit the most 15
 Southern Parts of it. They are very Beautiful; but like some other pretty Creatures, are apt to be loud and mischievous.

27. Betwixt this and Edenton there are many thuckleberry Slashes, which afford a convenient 20
 Harbour for Wolves and Foxes. The first of these wild Beasts is not so large and fierce as they are in other countries more Northerly. He will not attack a Man in the keenest of his Hunger, but run away from him, as from an Animal more 25
 mischievous than himself.

The Foxes are much bolder, and will Sometimes not only make a Stand, but likewise assault any one that would balk them of their Prey. The Inhabitants hereabouts take the 30
 trouble to dig abundance of Wolf-Pits, so deep and perpendicular, that when a Wolf is once tempted into them, he can no more Scramble out again, than a Husband who has taken the Leap can Scramble out of Matrimony. 35

Most of the Houses in this Part of the Country are Log-houses, covered with Pine or Cypress Shingles, 3 feet long, and one broad. They are hung upon Laths with Peggs, and their doors too turn upon Wooden Hinges, and have wooden 40
 Locks to Secure them, so that the Building is finisht without Nails or other Iron-Work. They also set up their Pales without any Nails at all, and indeed more Securely than those that are nail'd. There are 3 Rails mortised into the Posts, 45
 the lowest of which serves as a Sill with a Groove in the Middle, big enough to receive the End of the Pales: the middle Part of the Pale rests against the Inside of the Next Rail, and the Top of it is brought forward to the outside of the uppermost. Such Wreathing of the Pales in and 50
 out makes them stand firm, and much harder

27. Tho' it threaten'd Rain both Yesterday & today, yet Heaven was so kind to our Friends in the Dismal as to keep it from Falling. I perswaded Meanwell to take the Bark, which He did with good effect, tho' he continued very faint & low-Spirited. He took Firebrand's Neglect in great Dudgeon, and amidst all his good Nature cou'd not forbear a great deal of Resentment; but I won his Heart entirely by the tender Care I took of him in his illness. I also gain'd the Men's Affection by dressing their wounds, & giving them little Remedys for their complaints. Nor was I less in my Landlords Books, for acting the Doctor in his Family. Tho' I observ'd some Distempers in it, that were past my Skill to cure. For his Wife & Heir Apparent were so enclin'd to a cheerfull Cup, that our Liquor was very unsafe in their keeping. I had a long time observed that they made themselves happy every day, before the Sun had run one third of his course, which no doubt gave some uneasiness to the Old Gentleman: but Custome that reconciles most Evils, made him bear it with Christian 5
 Patience.

As to the Young Gentleman, he seem'd to be as worthless as any homebred Squire I had ever met with, & much the worse for having a good Opinion of himself. His good Father intended him for the Mathematicks, but he never cou'd rise higher in that Study than to gage a Rum Cask. His Sisters are very sensible Industrious Damsels, who tho' they see Gentlemen but Seldom, have the Grace to resist their Importunitys, & tho' they are innocently free, will

to unfix than when nail'd in the Ordinary way.

Within 3 or 4 Miles of Edenton, the Soil appears to be a little more fertile, tho' it is much cut with Slashes, which seem all to have a tendency towards the Dismal.

This Town is Situate on the North side of Albermarle Sound, which is there about 5 miles over. A Dirty Slash runs all along the Back of it, which in the Summer is a foul annoyance, and furnishes abundance of that Carolina 10 plague, musquetas. There may be 40 or 50 Houses, most of them Small, and built without Expense. A Citizen here is counted Extravagant, if he has Ambition enough to aspire to a Brick-chimney. Justice herself is but indifferently 15 Lodged, the Court-House having much the Air of a Common Tobacco-House. I believe this is the only Metropolis in the Christian or Mahometan World, where there is neither Church, Chappel, Mosque, Synagogue, or any other Place 20 of Publick Worship of any Sect or Religion whatsoever.

What little Devotion there may happen to be is much more private than their vices. The People seem easy without a Minister, as long as they 25 are exempted from paying Him. Sometimes the Society for propagating the Gospel has had the Charity to send over Missionaries to this Country; but unfortunately the Priest has been too Lewd² for the people, or, which oftener happens, 30 they too lewd for the Priest. For these Reasons these Reverend Gentlemen have always left their Flocks as arrant Heathen as they found them. Thus much however may be said for the Inhabitants of Edenton, that not a Soul has the 35 least taint of Hypocrisy, or Superstition, acting very Frankly and above-board in all their Excesses.

Provisions here are extremely cheap, and extremely good, so that People may live plentifully 40 at a triffling expense. Nothing is dear but Law, Physick, and Strong Drink, which are all bad in their Kind, and the last they get with so much Difficulty, that they are never guilty of the Sin of Suffering it to Sour upon their Hands. Their 45 Vanity generally lies not so much in having a handsome Dining-Room, as a Handsome House of Office: in this Kind of Structure they are really extravagant.

They are rarely guilty of Flattering or making 50

indulge them in no dangerous Libertys. However their cautious Father having some Notion of Female Frailty, from what he observed in their Mother, never suffers them to lie out of his own 5 Chamber.

² Ignorant; base.

any Court to their governors, but treat them with all the Excesses of Freedom and Familiarity. They are of Opinion their rulers wou'd be apt to grow insolent, if they grew Rich, and for that reason take care to keep them poorer, and more dependent, if possible, than the Saints in New England used to do their Governors. They have very little coin, so they are forced to carry on their Home-Traffick with Paper-Money. This is the only Cash that will tarry in the Country, and for that reason the Discount goes on increasing between that and real Money, and will do so to the End of the Chapter.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

1703 - 1758

Having produced him, the Americans need not despair of their metaphysicians. We do not scruple to say, that he is one of the acutest, most powerful, and, of all reasoners, the most conscientious and sincere.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT in the *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1829.

Jonathan Edwards, greatest of American theologians, was a native of Connecticut, then a stronghold of conservatism. He was a precocious youth, and at the age of fourteen he read with eager interest John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. He graduated from Yale in 1720 and spent two additional years there in the study of theology. In 1726 he became assistant pastor, at Northampton, Mass., to his grandfather, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard. In 1729, when Stoddard died, Edwards became sole pastor. A religious revival at Northampton was the forerunner of the Great Awakening, which was felt on both sides of the Atlantic. This was the time of George Whitefield's visit to America. For a time secular tendencies were checked, and Edwards hoped for a permanent return to the religious zeal of the early Puritans. Reaction set in, however, and Edwards was dismissed by his congregation in 1750. From 1751 to 1757 he preached to the Indians at Stockbridge. In the latter year he was elected President of Nassau Hall (Princeton). He died the next year of smallpox.

All his life Edwards was a student and a writer. Had he chosen, he might have become a literary figure of considerable importance. In him one finds a rare combination of the logician and the mystic. He gave his best efforts to the defense of Calvinism, which was losing ground throughout the colonies. His most famous work is a treatise on the *Freedom of the Will*

(1754), probably the most notable work produced by an American theologian. His most famous sermon is "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," preached at Enfield, Mass., in 1741. His "Personal Narrative" is a classic of its kind, worthy of a place beside John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and Tolstoy's *My Confession*. "Sarah Pierrepont" is an account of the woman whom Edwards was to marry in 1727. His "Narrative of Surprising Conversions" gives a vivid account of the religious revival in Northampton. Among more recent materials are Thomas H. Johnson's chapter in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948) and Perry Miller's *Jonathan Edwards* (1949) and *Images and Shadows of Divine Things* (1948).

There are biographies of Edwards by A. V. G. Allen (1889), H. B. Parkes (1930), A. C. McGiffert (1932), and Ola Elizabeth Winslow (1940); the last is the best. Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson edited for the American Writers Series in 1935 a useful volume of selections with introduction, notes, and bibliography. See also Mr. Johnson's *The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (1943) and Orville A. Hitchcock's chapter in W. N. Brigance (ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (1943). An able but unsympathetic essay on Edwards appears in Volume VIII of the *Works* of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

(about 1740)

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys, and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I with some of my schoolmates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element

when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

5 But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college; when it pleased God, to seize me with the pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. 10 And yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with my quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till, after many conflicts, with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practice many religious duties; but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main busi-

ness of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner; which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded: I was indeed brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ.—My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But [I] never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, and hardening whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet.

Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.

The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine

things that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i:17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.*

As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought within myself, how excellent a being that was, and how happy I should be if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapt up in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him forever! I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature in this.

From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant.¹ ii:1, used to be abundantly with me, *I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys*. The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away, in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of soul, that I know not how to express.

¹ Canticles; the Song of Solomon.

Not long after I began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation. And as I was walking there and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; a high, great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so delightful to me as thunder and lightning; formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing, or chant for my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction, as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart

seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 28: *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.* I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what I then had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, until I went to preach at New York, which was about a year and a half after they began; and while I was there, I felt them, very sensibly, in a higher degree than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness, were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceedingly amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be in every thing a complete Christian; and conform to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after progress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy, and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness, than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means, how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness, than ever I pursued

any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependance on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness, and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments there, and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love. And it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within, I could not express as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness; and said sometimes to myself, "I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes." It appeared to me, that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement, in comparison of it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and rapture to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peace-

fully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness, that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this, to lie low before God, as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL, that I might become as a little child.

While at New York, I was sometimes much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

On *January 12, 1723*, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight with all my might, against the world, the flesh and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligation.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of anything that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public news letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interest of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on di-

vine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Weathersfield, by water, and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night, after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to lodge; and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge, on Saturday, and there kept the Sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, I remained much in a like frame of mind, as when at New York; only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my Diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state, where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm, and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to

think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease, but will last to all eternity! I continued much in the same frame, in the general, as when at New York, till I went to New Haven as tutor to the college; particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New Haven I sunk in religion; my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New Haven, and while endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further; where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine, pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning; which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul with delight made its own language, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning. I say, more than they that watch for the morning;* and when the light of day came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But, some time after this, I was again greatly diverted in my mind with some temporal concerns that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul; and went on through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town,² I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely being, chiefly on the account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in shewing mercy to whom he would shew mercy; and man's absolute dependance on the opera-

² Northampton, Mass.

tions of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me. Isa. xxxii:2. *A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, &c.*

It has often appeared to me delightful, to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think with sweetness, and longings, and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matth. xviii:3, has often been sweet to me, *except ye be converted and become as little children, &c.* I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self, humbly exalting him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into, and out of Christ; to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble unfeigned confidence in him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, Psal. cxv:1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.* And those words of Christ, Luke x:21. *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* That sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit he was.

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious

to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate; it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect, all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies, which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Saviour; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

Once as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express,

emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

Often, since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my own heart, than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind: of all that have been, since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expression seemed exceedingly faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth, "Infinite upon infinite—Infinite upon infinite!" When I look into my

heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far beyond the sight of every thing, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet, it seems to me, that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small, and faint; it is enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew at the time, that my repentance was nothing to my sin.

I have greatly longed of late, for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and, when I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation to me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be "humbled to the dust"; that may be a proper expression for them, but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, "to lie infinitely low before God." And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of any joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own amiableness, performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where, all around me.

Though it seems to me, that, in some respects, I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure;

yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular, I had such a discovery of the excellency of the gospel above all other doctrines, that I could not but say to myself, "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine"; and of Christ, "This is my chosen Prophet." It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night, (*January, 1739*) I had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping, which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, "How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.

[*Sarah Pierrepont*]
(1723; 1829)

They say there is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do

any thing wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her.

from THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

(1754)

CONCLUSION

As it has been demonstrated that the futurity of all future events is established by previous necessity, either natural or moral; so it is manifest that the Sovereign Creator and Disposer of the world has ordered this necessity by ordering his own conduct, either in designedly acting or forbearing to act. For, as the being of the world is from God, so the circumstances in which it had its being at first, both negative and positive, must be ordered by him in one of these ways; and all the necessary consequences of these circumstances must be ordered by him. And God's active and positive interpositions, after the world was created, and the consequences of these interpositions; also every instance of his forbearing to interpose, and the sure consequences of this forbearance, must all be determined according to his pleasure. And therefore every event, which is the consequence of any thing whatsoever, or that is connected with any foregoing thing or circumstance, either positive or negative, as the ground or reason of its existence, must be ordered of God; either by a designed efficiency and interposition, or a designed forbearing to operate or interpose. But, as has been proved, all events whatsoever are necessarily connected with something foregoing, either positive or negative, which is the ground of their existence. It follows, therefore, that the whole series of events is thus connected with something in the state of things, either positive or negative, which is original in the series; i.e., something which is connected with nothing preceding that, but God's own immediate conduct, either his acting or forbearing to act. From whence it follows, that as God designedly orders his own conduct, and its connected consequences, it must necessarily be that he designedly orders all things.

II

THE
REVOLUTIONARY
PERIOD

1765 - 1789

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

1765 - 1789

These are the times that try men's souls.

—THOMAS PAINE, *The Crisis* (1776).

I

The effect of the Revolution upon American literature was both good and bad. A great war supplies excellent materials for the historical novelist of later times, but it is not favorable to the immediate production of great literature. The Revolutionary War diverted Philip Freneau and the Connecticut Wits from literature to propaganda and satire. Our Colonial culture, which had reached its highest point by 1765, was set back for at least a generation by the war. Schools and colleges found it impossible to function with regularity, and as a result many young men had their education interrupted, and there was no GI Bill of Rights which would have enabled them to complete it. The destruction of property was great. The greatest loss perhaps was in the departure of Loyalists, many of whom belonged to families of wealth and culture. Large numbers went to England and to Canada. In this instance our loss was Canada's gain, for the beginnings of Canadian literature go back to American Tories.

The traditional American view of the Revolution is too simple to be accurate. We have forgotten that it was in effect a civil war and as such one of the most bitter of all wars. John Adams estimated that about one-third of the people were opposed to the Revolution in all its stages. Perhaps another third were comparatively indifferent. Until Kenneth Roberts in 1940 published *Oliver Wiswell*, we had forgotten how badly many of the Tories were treated. In the traditional view the Tories were villains, following the lead of those arch-villains, George III, Lord North, and Benedict Arnold. On the other hand, some of our latter-day journalistic historians have carried their debunking of the Revolutionary leaders to such an extreme that, before Pearl Harbor, some Americans were wondering if our country were worth fighting for.

Today it is easier than it has been to study sympathetically the British case against the colonies, for the two nations have grown closer together since 1914 and there are those who regret that they were ever separated. In the eighteenth century the British ministry desired

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a closer articulation of the various parts of the Empire, which is easily understandable, but it chose untactful methods to bring about the desired result. The effort to make the colonies an integral part of the Empire revealed the fact that the colonists had already grown into something other than typical Englishmen. Having to a large extent governed themselves for many years, they had no desire for stricter control from overseas.

There were Americans, however, who desired a closer union with Great Britain. In 1754 Benjamin Franklin submitted a plan (rejected by the Colonial legislative bodies) for bringing the colonies together under a Governor-General appointed by the King and a Grand Council made up of representatives appointed by the General Assembly of each colony. In 1789 Franklin observed that if his Albany Plan had been adopted, "the subsequent separation of the Colonies from the Mother Country might not so soon have happened." In December, 1754, Franklin, visiting Governor Shirley in Boston, was shown an English plan of unification which provided for a council of the Colonial governors and a tax to be levied on the colonies by an act of Parliament. He wrote to Shirley: "I apprehend, that excluding the *people* of the colonies from all share in the choice of the grand council will give extreme dissatisfaction, as well as the taxing them by act of Parliament, where they have no representative." When Shirley modified his plan so as to permit the colonies to elect representatives to the House of Commons, Franklin replied that it was his opinion "that such a union would be very acceptable to the colonies, provided they had a reasonable number of representatives allowed them; and that all the old acts of Parliament restraining the trade or cramping the manufactures of the colonies be at the same time repealed, and the British subjects *on this side the water* put, in those respects, on the same footing with those in Great Britain. . . ." He added: "I should hope too, that by such a union the people of Great Britain, and the people of the colonies, would learn to consider themselves, as not belonging to a different community with different interests, but to one community with one interest; which I imagine would contribute to strengthen the whole, and greatly lessen the danger of future separations." Twelve years later Franklin wrote to Lord Kames: "I am fully persuaded with you, that a *Consolidating Union*, by a fair and equal representation of all the parts of this empire in Parliament, is the only firm basis on which its political grandeur and prosperity can be founded." Such a union was not to be, but from the lesson of the American Revolution the British eventually learned the wisdom of permitting their other colonies largely to govern themselves.

England became in the late nineteenth century one of the great democratic nations of the world, but in the eighteenth century it was ruled by a small minority composed chiefly of two classes: the merchants and the great landowners. Their attitude was that the colonies existed primarily for the benefit of the mother country. Colonial commerce was regarded as the property of England; and so there were severe restrictions on trade, on manufacturing, and on the issue of paper money. The British Board of Trade could veto acts passed by the Colonial legislatures. The *Boston Gazette* complained on April 29, 1765; "A colonist cannot make a button, a horseshoe, nor a hobnail, but some sooty ironmonger or respectable button-maker of Britain shall bawl and squall that his honor's worship is most egregiously maltreated, injured, cheated, and robbed by the rascally American republicans." The British Parliament was not then the representative body it has since become. Only about 160,000 of some eight millions could vote in Parliamentary elections,

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and there were many rotten boroughs. There was little real difference between Whigs and Tories as regards American policies, nor was King George's attitude essentially different from theirs. American leaders made some attempts to secure the support of British liberals but with little success. Outside Parliament there were a good many Englishmen who were vaguely sympathetic with the American cause, but in that body Edmund Burke was almost the only outstanding leader who expressed much sympathy for the American position.

II

The American Revolution gave birth to a remarkable body of political writing. While these orations, official documents, and pamphlets are on the outer fringes of belles-lettres, they compare favorably with the best of the kind written in the mother country in any period. The Earl of Chatham (the elder William Pitt) said in the House of Lords:

"When your lordships look at the papers transmitted to us from America; when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow, that in all my reading and observation—and it has been my favourite study—I have read Thucydides and have studied and admired the master statesmen of the world—that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general Congress at Philadelphia."

Often in the course of a prolonged war the very objectives of the combatants change, as notably in the Civil War and the First World War. From local disputes over taxation developing in the 1760's, the American Revolution (1775-1783) became a war for the rights of man. The ideal of political democracy memorably expressed in the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776) carried with it implications of democracy in other spheres, economic, social, religious, cultural, and literary. Independence, however, was not the aim of the Massachusetts militia men who in April, 1775, "fired the shot heard round the world." It was a recent English immigrant, Thomas Paine, who in his widely read pamphlet *Common Sense* (January 10, 1776) showed the patriots their real goals of independence and republicanism.

The natural rights philosophy to which the Revolutionary leaders appealed may be traced back to John Milton and other Puritan thinkers who justified the dethronement of Charles I, but the doctrine was given a new formulation by John Locke and other writers who defended the expulsion of James II in 1688. According to this doctrine, which has no historical foundation, individuals possessed all natural rights in the state of nature which preceded the creation of society and government. It was further held that when men departed from the natural state and united under social compacts or contracts to form societies and governments they relinquished some of their individual rights in order better to preserve such inalienable, God-given rights as those of life, liberty, and property. In America, Revolutionary writers and orators generally held that a social compact was formed only by the people themselves (and not by them and their rulers as the two parties) and that each individual was a party to the pact. The government, created by a compact of all individuals under the jurisdiction of its laws, was the servant of its master, the people, the ultimate source of all political authority. The government was considered as possessing only the powers granted to it as a trust by the governed, while all powers not granted in

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the compact or constitution of government were reserved to the people, to whom the government was at all times responsible. When a ruler exceeded the authority so delegated to him, the ruled were justified in resuming the usurped authority and even in defending their reserved rights by revolution if necessary. The natural rights philosophy is briefly expressed in the Declaration of Independence, but it is given in greater detail in the Virginia Bill of Rights, written by George Mason. This document was clearly in Jefferson's mind when he wrote the Declaration. Its influence is also obvious in the national Bill of Rights, which consists of the first ten amendments to the federal Constitution. We give here six of the sixteen paragraphs of the Virginia document:

"A declaration of rights made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention; which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.

"1. That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot by any compact deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

"2. That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.

"3. That government is, or ought to be instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and that when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.

"4. That no man, or set of men, are entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of publick services; which, not being descendible, neither ought the offices of magistrate, legislator or judge to be hereditary.

"12. That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotick governments.

"16. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force, or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practise Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other."

One of the great results of the Revolution was the achievement of some semblance of unity among the thirteen colonies. It was extremely difficult to make a nation out of such divergent units or, as John Adams put it, to make thirteen clocks all strike at the same time. In spite of provincialism and suspicion, the leaders of the various colonies managed to work together better than might have been expected from the wide extent of Colonial jealousies suggested by Charles M. Andrews in his *Colonial Folkways* (1919):

"... to the New Englander the well-known hospitality, good breeding, and politeness of the Southerners seemed little more than a sham. . . . Even [Josiah] Quincy

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himself, no ill-natured critic, could find in Virginia no courteous gentlemen and generous hosts but only 'knaves and sharpers' given to practices that were 'knavish and trickish.' . . .

"Little more exact, on the other hand, was the Southerner's opinion of New England, to him a land of pretended holiness and disagreeable self-righteousness. He . . . charged [the New Englander] with business methods that were little short of thievery."

The Revolution brought a new nation into the world, but few even in this country had any notion of what the extent of its territory, population, and power would be by the middle of the twentieth century. The Revolution also prepared the way for a cultural and literary development not based primarily on that of England. The alliance with France paved the way for the coming of cultural influences other than English.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1706 - 1790

These two [Franklin and Emerson] are, I think, the most distinctively and honourably American of your writers; they are the most original and the most valuable.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, "Emerson" (1883).

Franklin was born in Boston, the tenth son of a tallow chandler. He was, as the *Autobiography* informs us, mainly self-educated. He was apprenticed to his half-brother, James, who founded the *New England Courant*, to which Benjamin contributed some of his earliest writings. These were in the tradition of the *Spectator*, which was widely imitated in the colonies. Although Bostonians, the Franklins had little in common with Cotton Mather, whose *Essays to Do Good* Franklin, however, read with appreciation. At seventeen Franklin, having quarreled with James, ran away to Philadelphia, where he found an environment more congenial than Boston had been. In 1726 he went to London, where he stayed two years. Already he was ceasing to be a provincial and becoming a citizen of the eighteenth-century world.

In Philadelphia his business was that of a printer. By 1748, with an income of something like two thousand pounds a year, Franklin was able to devote most of his time and energies to public services. He had already started *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1732–1757), served as Clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly (1736–1751), and helped to found the American Philosophical Society in 1743. In 1741 he founded the *General Magazine*, the second oldest (by three days) American magazine. In 1751 he founded the Philadelphia Academy, which became the University of Pennsylvania. His experiments with electricity brought him international fame and honorary degrees from Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, St. Andrews, and Oxford. His inventive genius produced the Franklin stove, bifocal glasses, and various other devices. His *Autobiography* brings the story of his life down to 1757, just the time when his most distinguished public services began.

In that year he went to England as the agent of the Pennsylvania Assembly. In 1762 he returned to Philadelphia but was immediately sent back. Between 1768 and 1770 Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts made him their representative. Convinced that further efforts to prevent war were useless, he sailed for America in March, 1775. He was elected a member of the Continental Congress, which placed him on the committee to draft a declaration of independence. He was in France from 1776 to 1785. The alliance with France

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was in large part due to his tireless efforts. He was extremely popular in France, where he was regarded as a product of the simple, natural life. With John Adams and John Jay he signed the Treaty of Paris, by which Great Britain acknowledged the independence of the United States. He was a member of the convention which framed the federal Constitution.

Franklin was one of the greatest men of the eighteenth century and one of the most versatile men who ever lived. His life may profitably be compared with those of two notable contemporaries, Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Johnson. With Franklin, literature was largely incidental; he wrote to promote practical ends. And yet his prose style is one that almost any eighteenth-century writer might have envied; it has ease and charm as well as clearness, force, and flexibility.

There are numerous biographies of Franklin, but the latest and best is that of Carl Van Doren (1938), who also wrote the chapter on Franklin in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). Carl Becker's biographical sketch in the *D. A. B.* is an admirable short biography. The two best editions of his writings, neither complete, are those edited by John Bigelow in ten volumes (1887-1889) and A. H. Smyth in ten volumes (1905-1907). There is an excellent essay on Franklin by the great French critic Sainte-Beuve, which may be read in Katharine P. Wormeley's translation in his *Portraits of the Eighteenth Century* (1905). The volume of selections from Franklin in the American Writers Series, edited by F. L. Mott and C. E. Jorgenson (1936), contains an excellent introduction and a good working bibliography. Further references may be found in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

from THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY (1771, 1784-1789)

Franklin's literary reputation rests mainly upon the *Autobiography*, which is hardly surpassed in its kind by anything ever written. It was composed at different times between 1771 and 1789; and it brings the story of his life down only to 1757. The story of its publication is a complex affair. In 1816 his grandson, Temple Franklin, published a much expurgated, Bowdlerized version. In 1868 John Bigelow published an edition based on a manuscript which he had found in France, and for the first time the *Autobiography* appeared in something like the form in which it had been written.

For some account of the various manuscripts of the *Autobiography*, see Max Farrand, "Benjamin Franklin's Memoirs," *Huntington Library Bulletin*, October, 1936. The best editions are those edited by Max Farrand: *Benjamin Franklin's Memoirs: Parallel Text Edition* (1949) and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: A Restoration of a "Fair Copy"* (1949).

[INTRODUCTORY]

TWYFORD, at the
Bishop of St. Asaph's, 1771.

DEAR SON, I have ever had a Pleasure in ob-

taining any little Anecdotes of my Ancestors. You may remember the Enquiries I made among the Remains of my Relations when you were with me in England; and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Now imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the Circumstances of my Life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with; and expecting a Weeks uninterrupted Leisure in my present Country Retirement, I sit down to write them for you. To which I have besides some other Inducements. Having emerg'd from the Poverty and Obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a State of Affluence and some Degree of Reputation in the World, and having gone so far thro' Life with a considerable Share of Felicity, the conducting Means I made use of, which, with the Blessing of God, so well succeeded, my Posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own Situations, and therefore fit to be imitated. That Felicity, when I reflected on it, has induc'd me sometimes to say, that were it offer'd to my Choice, I should have no Objection to a Repetition of the same Life from its Beginning, only asking the Advantages Authors

have in a second Edition to correct some Faults of the first. So would I if I might, besides correcting] the Faults, change some sinister Accidents and Events of it for others more favourable, but tho' this were deny'd, I should still accept the Offer. However, since such a Repetition is not to be expected, the next Thing most like living one's Life over again, seems to be a *Recollection* of that Life; and to make that Recollection as durable as possible, the putting it down in Writing. Hereby, too, I shall indulge the Inclination so natural in old Men, to be talking of themselves and their own past Actions, and I shall indulge it, without being troublesome to others who thro' respect to Age might think themselves oblig'd to give me a Hearing, since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And lastly (I may as well confess it, since my Denial of it will be believ'd by no Body) perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own *Vanity*. Indeed I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory Words, *Without vanity I may say*, &c., but some vain thing immediately follow'd. Most People dislike *Vanity* in others whatever share they have of it themselves, but I give it fair Quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of Good to the Possessor and to others that are within his Sphere of Action: And therefore in many Cases it would not be quite absurd if a Man were to thank God for his *Vanity* among the other Comforts of Life.—

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all Humility to acknowledge, that I owe the mention'd Happiness of my past Life to his kind Providence, which led me to the Means I us'd and gave them Success. My Belief of this, induces me to *hope*, tho' I must not *presume*, that the same Goodness will still be exercis'd towards me in continuing that Happiness, or in enabling me to bear a fatal Reverse, which I may experience as others have done, the Complexion of my future Fortune being known to him only: in whose Power it is to bless to us even our Afflictions. - - -

[Self-Education]

From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, my first collection was of John Bun-

yan's works in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections*; they were small chapmen's books, and cheap, forty or fifty in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was now resolved I should not be a clergyman. Plutarch's *Lives* there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called an *Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called *Essays to do Good*, which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

And after some time an ingenious tradesman, Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented our printing-house, took notice of me, invited me to his library, and very kindly lent me such books as I chose to read. I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces; my brother, thinking it might turn to account, encouraged me, and put me on composing occasional ballads. One was called *The Lighthouse Tragedy*, and contained

an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters: the other was a sailor's song, on the taking of *Teach* (or Blackbeard) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street-ballad style; and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully; the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one; but as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how, in such a situation, I acquired what little ability I have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another, which disputatious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and, perhaps, enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinborough.

A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me

about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I ow'd to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered my faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after

work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

When about 16 years of age I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconveniency, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me, weekly, half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

And now it was that, being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Cocker's book of *Arithmetick*, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Shermy's books of *Navigation*, and became acquainted with the little geometry they contain; but never proceeded far in that science. And I read about this time Locke *On Human Understanding*, and the *Art of Thinking*, by Messrs. du Port Royal.

While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), at the end of which there were two little sketches of the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a specimen of a

dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procur'd Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, wherein there are many instances of the same method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine, I found this method safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took a delight in it, practis'd it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continu'd this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced anything that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion, but rather say, I conceive or apprehend a thing to be so and so; it appears to me, or *I should think it so or so*, for such and such reasons; or *I imagine it to be so*; or *it is so*, if I am not mistaken. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us,—to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure. For, if you would inform, a positive and dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention. If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix'd in your present opinions, modest, sensible men, who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error. And by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in *pleasing* your hearers, or to

persuade those whose concurrence you desire.
Pope says, judiciously:

*"Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot;"*

farther recommending to us

"To speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence."

And he might have coupled with this line
that which he has coupled with another, I think, 10
less properly:

"For want of modesty is want of sense."

If you ask, Why less properly? I must repeat the
lines:

*"Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of modesty is want of sense."*

Now, is not *want of sense* (where a man is so
unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his 20
want of modesty? and would not the lines stand
more justly thus?

*"Immodest words admit but this defense,
That want of modesty is want of sense."*

This, however, I should submit to better judg-
ments.

[Religion and Morality]

Tho' I seldom attended any public worship, I
had still an opinion of its propriety, and of its
utility when rightly conducted, and I regularly
paid my annual subscription for the support of
the only Presbyterian minister or meeting we
had in Philadelphia. He used to visit me some-
times as a friend, and admonish me to attend his
administrations, and I was now and then pre-
vail'd on to do so, once for five Sundays suc-
cessively. Had he been in my opinion a good 30
preacher, perhaps I might have continued, not-
withstanding the occasion I had for the Sunday's
leisure in my course of study; but his discourses
were chiefly either polemic arguments, or ex-
planations of the peculiar doctrines of our sect,
and were all to me very dry, uninteresting, and
unedifying, since not a single moral principle
was inculcated or enforc'd, their aim seeming
to be rather to make us Presbyterians than good
citizens.

At length he took for his text that verse of the
fourth chapter of Philippians: *"Finally, brethren,*

*whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure,
lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue,
or any praise, think on these things."* And I

imagin'd, in a sermon on such a text, we could
not miss of having some morality. But he con-
fin'd himself to five points only, as meant by the
apostle, viz.: 1. Keeping holy the Sabbath day.
2. Being diligent in reading the holy Scriptures.
3. Attending duly the publick worship. 4. Par-
taking of the Sacrament. 5. Paying a due respect
to God's ministers. These might be all good
things; but, as they were not the kind of good
things that I expected from that text, I despaired
of ever meeting with them from any other, was
disgusted, and attended his preaching no more.
I had some years before compos'd a little Liturgy,
or form of prayer, for my own private use (viz.,
in 1728), entitled *Articles of Belief and Acts of
Religion*. I return'd to the use of this, and went
no more to the public assemblies. My conduct
might be blameable, but I leave it, without at-
tempting further to excuse it; my present purpose
being to relate facts, and not to make apologies
for them.

It was about this time I conceiv'd the bold
and arduous project of arriving at moral per-
fection. I wish'd to live without committing any
fault at any time; I would conquer all that either
natural inclination, custom, or company might
lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what
was right and wrong, I did not see why I might
not always do the one and avoid the other. But
I soon found I had undertaken a task of more
difficulty than I had imagined. While my care
was employ'd in guarding against one fault, I
was often surprised by another; habit took the
advantage of inattention; inclination was some-
times too strong for reason. I concluded, at
length, that the mere speculative conviction
that it was our interest to be completely virtuous,
was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and
that the contrary habits must be broken, and
good ones acquired and established, before we
can have any dependence on a steady, uniform
rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I there-
fore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral
virtues I had met with in my reading, I found
the catalogue more or less numerous, as different
writers included more or fewer ideas under the
same name. Temperance, for example, was by
some confined to eating and drinking, while by

others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I propos'd to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annex'd to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occur'd to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts, were:

1. TEMPERANCE

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. SILENCE

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. ORDER

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. RESOLUTION

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. FRUGALITY

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; *i.e.*, waste nothing.

6. INDUSTRY

Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. SINCERITY

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. JUSTICE

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. MODERATION

Avoid extreams; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. CLEANLINESS

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloaths, or habitation.

11. TRANQUILLITY

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. CHASTITY

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. HUMILITY

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judg'd it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone thro' the thirteen; and, as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arrang'd them with that view, as they stand above. Temperance first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquir'd and establish'd, Silence would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improv'd in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtain'd rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave *Silence* the second place. This and the next, *Order*, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. *Resolution*, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; *Frugality* and *Industry* freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of *Sincerity* and *Justice*, etc., etc. Conceiving then, that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his Golden Verses, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.

I made a little book¹ in which I allotted a

¹ This "little book" is dated July 1, 1733.

page for each of the virtues. I rul'd each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I cross'd these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

Form of the pages.

TEMPERANCE.							
EAT NOT TO DULLNESS; DRINK NOT TO ELEVATION.							
	S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.
T.							
S.	*	*		*		*	
O.	**	*	*		*	*	*
R.			*			*	
F.		*			*		
I.			*				
S.							
J.							
M.							
C.							
T.							
C.							
H.							

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid every the least offence against *Temperance*, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I suppos'd the habit of that virtue so much strengthen'd, and its opposite weaken'd, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go thro'

a course compleat in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplish'd the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination.

This my little book had for its motto these lines from Addison's *Cato*:

*"Here will I hold. If there's a power above us
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Thro' all her works), He must delight in virtue;
And that which He delights in must be happy."*

Another from Cicero,

*"O vitæ Philosophia dux! O virtutum indagatrix
expultrixque vitiorum! Unus dies, bene et ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati es² anteponeendus."*

Another from the Proverbs of Solomon, speaking of wisdom or virtue:

"Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."—iii. 16, 17.

And conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefix'd to my tables of examination, for daily use.

"O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favours to me."

I used also sometimes a little prayer which I took from Thomson's Poems, viz.:

*"Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good; teach me Thyself!*

²*"O Philosophy, the guide of life! O inducer of virtues and expeller of vices! One day spent well on account of your precepts is preferable to a sinful immortality."*

Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and fill my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!"

The precept of *Order* requiring that *every part of my business should have its allotted time*, one page in my little book contain'd the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day.

THE MORNING.	{	5	Rise, wash, and ad-
		6	dress <i>Powerful Good-</i>
			ness! Contrive day's
		7	business, and take the
Question. What good shall I do this day?	{		resolution of the day;
			prosecute the present
		15	study, and breakfast.
		8	
	{	9	
		10	Work.
		11	
		12	Read, or overlook
NOON.	{	1	my accounts, and dine.
		2	
		3	
		4	Work.
	{	5	
		6	Put things in their
		7	places. Supper. Music
		8	or diversion, or con-
Question. What good have I done to-day?	{		versation. Examination
		9	of the day.
		10	
		11	
	{	12	
		1	Sleep.
		2	
		3	
NIGHT.	{	4	

I enter'd upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continu'd it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surpris'd to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferr'd my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink, that made a durable stain, and on those lines I mark'd my faults with a black-lead pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went thro' one course only

in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employ'd in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

My scheme of *ORDER* gave me the most trouble; and I found that, tho' it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. *Order*, too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extreamly difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to it, and having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbour, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turn'd, while the smith press'd the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was without farther grinding. "No," said the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by-and-by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," says the man, "*but I think I like a speckled ax best.*" And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employ'd, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that "*a speckled ax was best*"; for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extream nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavour, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, tho' they never reach the wish'd-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor ow'd the constant felicity of his life, down to his 79th year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoy'd ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To Temperance he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to Industry and Frugality, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to Sincerity and Justice, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit. - - -

LETTERS

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN

This letter, addressed to a London printer, was never sent.

PHILADELPHIA, July 5, 1775.

MR. STRAHAN,

You are a Member of Parliament, and one of that Majority which has doomed my Country to Destruction.—You have begun to burn our

Towns, and murder our People.—Look upon your Hands! They are stained with the Blood of your Relations!—You and I were long Friends:—You are now my Enemy,—and I am

Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS

PASSY, July 27, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I received your very kind letter by Dr. Blagden, and esteem myself much honoured by your friendly Remembrance. I have been too much and too closely engaged in public Affairs, since his being here, to enjoy all the Benefit of his Conversation you were so good as to intend me. I hope soon to have more Leisure, and to spend a part of it in those Studies, that are much more agreeable to me than political Operations.

I join with you most cordially in rejoicing at the return of Peace. I hope it will be lasting, and that Mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable Creatures, have Reason and Sense enough to settle their Differences without cutting Throats; for, in my opinion, *there never was a good War, or a bad Peace*. What vast additions to the Conveniences and Comforts of Living might Mankind have acquired, if the Money spent in Wars had been employed in Works of public utility! What an extension of Agriculture, even to the Tops of our Mountains; what Rivers rendered navigable, or joined by Canals: what Bridges, Aqueducts, new Roads, and other public Works, Edifices, and Improvements, rendering England a complete Paradise, might have been obtained by spending those Millions in doing good, which in the last War have been spent in doing Mischief; in bringing Misery into thousands of Families, and destroying the Lives of so many thousands of working people, who might have performed the useful labour!

I am pleased with the late astronomical Discoveries made by our Society. Furnished as all Europe now is with Academies of Science, with nice Instruments and the Spirit of Experiment, the progress of human knowledge will be rapid, and discoveries made, of which we have at present no Conception. I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happi-

ness of knowing what will be known 100 years hence.

I wish continued success to the Labours of the Royal Society, and that you may long adorn their Chair; being, with the highest esteem, dear Sir, &c.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. Dr. Blagden will acquaint you with the experiment of a vast Globe sent up into the Air, much talked of here, and which, if prosecuted, may furnish means of new knowledge.

TO EZRA STILES

Ezra Stiles was President of Yale College and a grandson of Edward Taylor, the Puritan poet.

PHILADELPHIA, *March 9, 1790.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:

I received your kind letter of January 28, and am glad you have at length received the portrait of Governor Yale from his family, and deposited it in the College Library. He was a great and good man, and had the merit of doing infinite service to your country by his munificence to that institution. The honour you propose doing me by placing mine in the same room with his, is much too great for my deserts; but you always had a partiality for me, and to that it must be ascribed. I am, however, too much obliged to Yale College, the first learned society that took notice of me and adorned me with its honors, to refuse a request that comes from it thro' so esteemed a friend. But I do not think any one of the portraits you mention, as in my possession, worthy of the place and company you propose to place it in. You have an excellent artist lately arrived. If he will undertake to make one for you, I shall cheerfully pay the expence, but he must not delay setting about it, or I may slip thro' his fingers, for I am now in my eighty-fifth year, and very infirm. - - -

You desire to know something of my religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your curiosity amiss, and shall endeavor in a few words to gratify it. Here is my creed.

I believe in one God, creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in an-

other life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental principles of all sound religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them.

As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals, and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity; tho' it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as it probably has, of making his doctrines more respected and better observed; especially as I do not perceive that the Supreme takes it amiss, by distinguishing the unbelievers in his government of the world with any peculiar marks of his displeasure.

I shall only add, respecting myself, that, having experienced the goodness of that being in conducting me prosperously thro' a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness. My sentiments on this head you will see in the copy of an old letter enclosed, which I wrote in answer to one from a zealous religionist, whom I had relieved in a paralytic case by electricity, and who, being afraid I should grow proud upon it, sent me his serious though rather impertinent caution. I send you also the copy of another letter, which will shew something of my disposition relating to religion. With great and sincere esteem and affection, I am,

Your obliged old friend and most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Had not your college some present of books from the King of France? Please to let me know, if you had an expectation given you of more, and the nature of that expectation. I have a reason for the enquiry.

I confide that you will not expose me to criticism and censure by publishing any part of this communication to you. I have ever let others enjoy their religious sentiments, without reflecting on them for those that appeared to me unsupportable and even absurd. All sects here, and

we have a great variety, have experienced my good will in assisting them with subscriptions for building their new places of worship and as I have never opposed any of their doctrines, I hope to go out of the world in peace with them all.

THE WAY TO WEALTH

(1757)

In his Preface to *Poor Richard Improved* for 1758 Franklin grouped together, in the speech of Father Abraham at an auction, many of the best proverbs which had appeared in his earlier almanacs for a quarter of a century. Apart from the *Autobiography*, "The Way to Wealth" is the best-known work of its author. It has been assumed that it also contains the essence of Franklin's wisdom. There are, however, aspects of his philosophy which could hardly be represented here. The folk wisdom which inspires most proverbs is based largely upon prudence. In the earlier almanacs Franklin had included such proverbs—hardly suited to the speaker in "The Way to Wealth"—as: "He does not possess wealth; it possesses him"; "Avarice and happiness never saw each other. How then should they become acquainted?" and "Wealth is not his that has it, but his that enjoys it." A few of Poor Richard's proverbial sayings seem to be original with Franklin. Among these are "An empty bag cannot stand upright" and "Experience keeps a dear school, yet fools will learn in no other." The great majority of the proverbs, however, were borrowed from folk sayings and from authors of many lands. These he often improved. The English proverb, "A muffled cat is no good mouser," became in Franklin's version, "The cat in gloves catches no mice." For an illuminating discussion of the Poor Richard proverbs, see Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (1938), pp. 106 ff.

COURTEOUS READER

I have heard that nothing gives an Author so great Pleasure, as to find his Works respectfully quoted by other learned Authors. This Pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for tho' I have been, if I may say it without Vanity, an *eminent Author* of Almanacks annually now a full Quarter of a Century, my Brother Authors in the same Way, for what Reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their Applauses, and no other Author has taken the least Notice of me, so that did not my Writings produce me some solid *Pudding*, the great Deficiency of *Praise* would have quite discouraged me.

I concluded at length, that the People were

the best Judges of my merit; for they buy my Works; and besides, in my Rambles, where I am not personally known, I have frequently heard one or other of my Adages repeated, with, as *Poor Richard* says, at the End on 't; this gave me some Satisfaction, as it showed not only that my Instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some Respect for my Authority; and I own, that to encourage the Practice of remembering and repeating those wise Sentences, I have sometimes *quoted myself* with great Gravity.

Judge, then how much I must have been gratified by an Incident I am going to relate to you. I stopt my Horse lately where a great Number of People were collected at a Vendue of Merchant Goods. The Hour of Sale not being come, they were conversing on the Badness of the Times and one of the Company call'd to a plain clean old Man, with white Locks, "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the Times? Won't these heavy Taxes quite ruin the Country? How shall we be ever able to pay them? What would you advise us to?" Father *Abraham* stood up, and reply'd, "If you'd have my Advice, I'll give it you in short, for *A Word to the Wise is enough*, and *many Words won't fill a Bushel*, as *Poor Richard* says." They join'd in desiring him to speak his Mind, and gathering round him, he proceeded as follows;

"Friends," says he, "and Neighbours, the Taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the Government were the only Ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our *Idleness*, three times as much by our *Pride*, and four times as much by our *Folly*; and from these Taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an Abatement. However let us hearken to good Advice, and something may be done for us: *God helps them that help themselves*, as *Poor Richard* says, in his Almanack of 1733.

It would be thought a hard Government that should tax its People one-tenth Part of their *Time*, to be employed in its Service. But *Idleness* taxes many of us much more, if we reckon all that is spent in absolute *Sloth*, or doing of nothing, with that which is spent in idle Employments or Amusements, that amount to nothing. *Sloth*, by bringing on Diseases, absolutely shortens Life. *Sloth, like Rust, consumes faster than Labour wears; while the used Key is always bright*, as

Poor Richard says. *But dost thou love Life, then do not squander Time; for that's the stuff Life is made of*, as *Poor Richard* says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that *The Sleeping Fox catches no Poultry*, and that *There will be sleeping enough in the Grave*, as *Poor Richard* says.

If *Time* be of all *Things* the most precious, wasting *Time* must be, as *Poor Richard* says, the greatest *Prodigality*; since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost Time is never found again; and what we call Time enough, always proves little enough*: Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the Purpose; so by *Diligence* shall we do more with less *Perplexity*. *Sloth makes all Things difficult, but Industry all easy*, as *Poor Richard* says; and *He that riseth late must trot all Day, and shall scarce overtake his Business at Night*; while *Laziness* travels so slowly, that *Poverty* soon overtakes him, as we read in *Poor Richard*, who adds, *Drive thy Business, let not that drive thee; and Early to Bed, and early to rise, makes a Man healthy, wealthy, and wise*.

So what signifies *wishing* and *hoping* for better Times? We may make these Times better, if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish*, as *Poor Richard* says, and *he that lives upon Hope will die fasting. There are no Gains without Pains; then Help Hands, for I have no Lands, or if I have, they are smartly taxed*. And, as *Poor Richard* likewise observes, *He that hath a Trade hath an Estate; and he that hath a Calling, hath an Office of Profit and Honour*; but then the *Trade* must be worked at, and the *Calling* well followed, or neither the *Estate* nor the *Office* will enable us to pay our *Taxes*. If we are industrious, we shall never starve: for, as *Poor Richard* says, *At the working Man's House Hunger looks in, but dares not enter*. Nor will the *Bailiff* or the *Constable* enter, for *Industry pays Debts, while Despair encreaseth them*, says *Poor Richard*. What though you have found no *Treasure*, nor has any rich *Relation* left you a *Legacy*, *Diligence is the Mother of Goodluck* as *Poor Richard* says and *God gives all Things to Industry. Then plough deep, while Sluggards sleep, and you shall have Corn to sell and to keep*, says *Poor Dick*. Work while it is called *To-day*, for you know not how much you may be hindered *To-morrow*, which makes *Poor Richard* say, *One to-day is worth two To-morrows*, and farther, *Have you somewhat to do To-morrow, do it To-day*. If you were a Ser-

vant, would you not be ashamed that a good Master should catch you idle? Are you then your own Master, *be ashamed to catch yourself idle*, as *Poor Dick* says. When there is so much to be done for yourself, your Family, your Country, and your gracious King, be up by *Peep of Day*; *Let not the Sun look down and say, Inglorious here he lies*. Handle your tools without *Mittens*; remember that *The Cat in Gloves catches no Mice*, as *Poor Richard* says. 'Tis true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed, but stick to it steadily; and you will see great Effects, for *Constant Dropping wears away Stones*, and by *Diligence and Patience the Mouse ate in two the Cable*; and *Little Strokes fell great Oaks*, as *Poor Richard* says in his *Almanack*, the Year I cannot just now remember.

Methinks I hear some of you say, *Must a Man afford himself no Leisure*? I will tell thee, my friend, what *Poor Richard* says, *Employ thy Time well, if thou meanest to gain Leisure; and, since thou art not sure of a Minute, throw not away an Hour*. *Leisure*, is *Time* for doing something useful; this *Leisure* the diligent Man will obtain, but the *Lazy Man* never; so that, as *Poor Richard* says, *A Life of Leisure and a Life of Laziness are two Things*. Do you imagine that *Sloth* will afford you more *Comfort* than *Labour*? No, for as *Poor Richard* says, *Trouble springs from Idleness, and grievous Toil from needless Ease*. Many without *Labour*, would live by their *Wits* only, but they break for want of *Stock*. Whereas *Industry* gives *Comfort*, and *Plenty*, and *Respect*: *Fly Pleasures, and they'll follow you. The diligent Spinner has a large Shift; and now I have a Sheep and a Cow, everybody bids me good Morrow; all which is well said by Poor Richard*.

But with our *Industry*, we must likewise be *steady, settled, and careful*, and oversee our own Affairs with our own Eyes, and not trust too much to others; for, as *Poor Richard* says

*I never saw an oft-removed Tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed Family,
That throve so well as those that settled be.*

And again, *Three Removes is as bad as a Fire*; and again, *Keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee*; and again, *If you would have your Business done, go; if not, send*. And again,

*He that by the Plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.*

And again, *The Eye of a Master will do more Work than both his Hands*; and again, *Want of Care does us more Damage than Want of Knowledge*; and again, *Not to oversee Workmen, is to leave them your Purse open*. Trusting too much to others' Care is the Ruin of many; for, as the Almanack says, *In the Affairs of this World, Men are saved, not by Faith, but by the Want of it*; but a Man's own Care is profitable; for, saith Poor Dick, *Learning is to the Studious, and Riches to the Careful*, as well as *Power to the Bold*, and *Heaven to the Virtuous*. And farther, *If you would have a faithful Servant, and one that you like, serve yourself*. And again, he adviseth to Circumspection and Care, even in the smallest Matters, because sometimes *A little Neglect may breed great Mischief*; adding, for want of a Nail the Shoe was lost; for want of a Shoe the Horse was lost; and for want of a Horse the Rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the Enemy; all for want of Care about a Horse-shoe Nail.

So much for Industry, my Friends, and Attention to one's own Business; but to these we must add Frugality, if we would make our Industry more certainly successful. A Man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his Nose all his Life to the Grindstone, and die not worth a Groat at last. A fat Kitchen makes a lean Will, as Poor Richard says; and

*Many Estates are spent in the Getting,
Since Women for Tea forsook Spinning and Knitting,
And Men for Punch forsook Hewing and Splitting.*

If you would be wealthy, says he, in another Almanack, think of Saving as well as of Getting: *The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her Outgoes are greater than her Incomes.*

Away then with your expensive Follies, and you will not then have so much Cause to complain of hard Times, heavy Taxes, and chargeable Families; for, as Poor Dick says,

*Women and Wine, Game and Deceit,
Make the Wealth small and the Wants great.*

And farther, *What maintains one Vice, would bring up two Children*. You may think perhaps, that a little Tea, or a little Punch now and then, Diet a little more costly, Clothes a little finer, and a little Entertainment now and then, can be no great Matter; but remember what Poor Richard says, *Many a Little makes a Mickle*; and farther, *Beware of little Expences; A small Leak will sink a great Ship*; and again, *Who Dainties love,*

shall Beggars prove; and moreover, *Fools make Feasts, and wise Men eat them.*

Here you are all got together at this Vendue of Fineries and Knicknacks. You call them Goods; but if you do not take Care, they will prove Evils to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but if you have no Occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says; *Buy what thou hast no Need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy Necessaries*. And again, *At a great Pennyworth pause a while*: He means, that perhaps the Cheapness is apparent only, and not Real; or the bargain, by straitening thee in thy Business, may do thee more Harm than Good. For in another Place he says, *Many have been ruined by buying good Pennyworths*. Again, Poor Richard says, *'tis foolish to lay out Money in a Purchase of Repentance*; and yet this Folly is practised every Day at Vendues, for want of minding the Almanack. Wise Men, as Poor Dick says, *learn by others' Harms, Fools scarcely by their own*; but *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*.³ Many a one, for a Sake of Finery on the Back, have gone with a hungry Belly, and half-starved their Families. Silks and Sattins, Scarlet and Velvets, as Poor Richard says, *put out the Kitchen Fire*.

These are not the Necessaries of Life; they can scarcely be called the Conveniences; and yet only because they look pretty, how many want to have them! The artificial Wants of Mankind thus become more numerous than the Natural; and, as Poor Dick says, *for one poor Person, there are an hundred indigent*. By these, and other Extravagancies, the Genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who through Industry and Frugality have maintained their Standing; in which Case it appears plainly, that *A Ploughman on his Legs is higher than a Gentleman on his Knees*, as Poor Richard says. Perhaps they have had a small Estate left them, which they knew not the Getting of; they think, *'tis Day, and will never be Night*; that a little to be spent out of so much, is not worth minding; a Child and a Fool, as Poor Richard says, *imagine Twenty shillings and Twenty Years can never be spent but, always taking out of the Meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the Bottom*; as Poor Dick says, *When the Well's dry, they know the Worth of*

³ "Happy is he whom the dangers that befall others make cautious."

Water. But this they might have known before, if they had taken his Advice; *If you would know the Value of Money, go and try to borrow some; for, he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing;* and indeed so does he that lends to such People, when he goes to *get it in again*. *Poor Dick* farther advises, and says,

*Fond Pride of Dress is sure a very Curse;
E'er Fancy you consult, consult your Purse.*

And again, *Pride is as loud a Beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy*. When you have bought one fine Thing, you must buy ten more, that your Appearance may be all of a Piece; but *Poor Dick* says, *'Tis easier to suppress the first Desire, than to satisfy all that follow it*. And 'tis as truly Folly for the Poor to ape the Rich, as for the Frog to swell, in order to equal the ox.

*Great Estates may venture more,
But little Boats should keep near Shore.*

'Tis, however, a Folly soon punished; for *Pride that dines on Vanity, sups on Contempt*, as *Poor Richard* says. And in another Place, *Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty, and supped with Infamy*. And after all, of what Use is this *Pride of Appearance*, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote Health, or ease Pain; it makes no Increase of Merit in the Person, it creates Envy, it hastens Misfortune.

*What is a Butterfly? At best
He's but a Caterpillar drest.
The gaudy Fop's his Picture just,*

as *Poor Richard* says.

But what Madness must it be to *run in Debt* for these Superfluities! We are offered, by the Terms of this Vendue, *Six Months' Credit*; and that perhaps has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready Money, and hope now to be fine without it. But, ah, think what you do when you run in Debt; *you give to another Power over your Liberty*. If you cannot pay at the Time, you will be ashamed to see your Creditor; you will be in Fear when you speak to him; you will make poor pitiful sneaking Excuses, and by Degrees come to lose your Veracity, and sink into base downright lying; for, as *Poor Richard* says, *The second Vice is Lying, the first is running in Debt*. And again, to the same Purpose, *Lying rides upon Debt's Back*. Whereas a freeborn Englishman ought not to be ashamed or afraid to see or speak to any Man

living. But Poverty often deprives a Man of all Spirit and Virtue: *'Tis hard for an empty Bag to stand upright*, as *Poor Richard* truly says.

What would you think of that Prince, or that Government, who should issue an Edict forbidding you to dress like a Gentleman or a Gentlewoman, on Pain of Imprisonment or Servitude? Would you not say, that you were free, have a Right to dress as you please, and that such an Edict would be a Breach of your Privileges, and such a Government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under that Tyranny, when you run in Debt for such Dress! Your Creditor has Authority, at his Pleasure to deprive you of your Liberty, by confining you in Gaol for Life, or to sell you for a Servant, if you should not be able to pay him! When you have got your Bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of Payment; but *Creditors, Poor Richard* tells us, *have better Memories than Debtors*; and in another Place says, *Creditors are a superstitious Sect, great Observers of set Days and Times*. The Day comes round before you are aware, and the Demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it, Or if you bear your Debt in Mind, the Term which at first seemed so long, will, as it lessens, appear extremely short. *Time* will seem to have added Wings to his Heels as well as Shoulders. *Those have a short Lent*, saith *Poor Richard*, *who owe Money to be paid at Easter*. Then since, as he says, *The Borrower is a Slave to the Lender, and the Debtor to the Creditor*, disdain the Chain, preserve your Freedom; and maintain your Independence: Be *Industrious* and *free*; be *frugal* and *free*. At present, perhaps, you may think yourself in thriving Circumstances, and that you can bear a little Extravagance without Injury; but,

*For Age and Want, save while you may;
No Morning Sun lasts a whole Day,*

as *Poor Richard* says. Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever while you live, Expence is constant and certain; and *'tis easier to build two Chimnies, than to keep one in Fuel*, as *Poor Richard* says. So, *Rather go to Bed supperless than rise in Debt*.

*Get what you can, and what you get hold;
'Tis the Stone that will turn all your lead into Gold,*

as *Poor Richard* says. And when you have got the Philosopher's Stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad Times, or the Difficulty of paying Taxes.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD-----1765-1789

This Doctrine, my Friends, is *Reason* and *Wisdom*; but after all, do not depend too much upon your own *Industry*, and *Frugality*, and *Prudence*, though excellent Things, for they may all be blasted without the Blessing of Heaven; and therefore, ask that Blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember, *Job* suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

And now to conclude, *Experience keeps a dear School, but Fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that*; for it is true, *we may give Advice, but we cannot give Conduct*, as *Poor Richard* says: However, remember this, *They that won't be counselled, can't be helped*, as *Poor Richard* says: and farther, *That, if you will not hear Reason, she'll surely rap your Knuckles.*"

Thus the old Gentleman ended his Harangue. The People heard it, and approved the Doctrine, and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common Sermon; for the Vendue

opened, and they began to buy extravagantly, notwithstanding his Cautions and their own Fear of Taxes. I found the good Man had thoroughly studied my Almanacks, and digested all I had dropt on these Topicks during the Course of Five and twenty Years. The frequent Mention he made of me must have tired any one else, but my Vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious that not a tenth Part of the Wisdom was my own, which he ascribed to me, but rather the *Gleanings* I had made of the Sense of All Ages and Nations. However, I resolved to be the better for the Echo of it; and though I had at first determined to buy Stuff for a new Coat, I went away resolved to wear my old One a little longer. *Reader*, if thou wilt do the same, thy Profit will be as great as mine. *I am, as ever, thine to serve thee,*

RICHARD SAUNDERS.

July, 1757.

THOMAS PAINE

1737 - 1809

As for the rebels, it must be admitted that, though they are occasionally foul-mouthed and slovenly, and often vain, noisy, and altogether distasteful, they are the power that moves the world. I sometimes wish I had the courage and the character to be a rebel myself.

—GAMALIEL BRADFORD, "Thomas Paine" (1923).

In November, 1774, Thomas Paine landed in Philadelphia. Bankrupt, without a position, separated from his wife, he had left England for America at the suggestion of Benjamin Franklin. He became the ablest propagandist for the cause of the Revolution. In a series of pamphlets, *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis*, he advocated independence and urged armed resistance to the British. Washington, who knew their value, had some of these papers read to his troops. In the first number of the *Crisis* Paine began: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

"Where liberty is, there is my country," Franklin once said; Paine's reply was, "Where liberty is not, there is mine." From 1787 to 1802 Paine was in France and England. *The Rights of Man* (1792), a reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, was regarded in England as a libelous work, and Paine fled to Paris. He was outlawed in England, but he held a seat in the French Convention and was appointed member of a committee to draw up a new constitution. He incurred the hostility of the French radicals when he protested against the execution of Louis XVI. He was in prison most of the year 1794, until James Monroe got him released. He had already written a part of *The Age of Reason* (1794-1795), a statement of his religious views.

Jefferson assisted him to return to America in 1802. Paine's religious views—he was a Deist—made him unpopular. He was even denied the right to vote on the ground that he was not an American citizen. In poverty and ill health, he lived on until 1809.

His attempts at the "higher criticism" of the Bible have long militated against the full recognition of his importance as a writer. Theodore Roosevelt, who should have known better, referred to him as a "filthy little atheist." The quality of Paine's writing is admirably suggested in an entry which Gamaliel Bradford made in his journal, on June 11, 1922, while preparing his essay on Paine:

"Arrived today at the first reading of Paine's *Works*, and instantly perceive what I had not quite fathomed before, the secret of his greatness, such as he is. The man is a writer. . . . Why, he is a real writer, a master of style, almost of the quality of Swift and Voltaire, if not quite, because he had not the depth of the one and the fire of the other. But what speed, what ease, what inimitable, careless, natural mastery of words! Why, these anonymous essays which Conway pulls out of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, who can write like that today?"

Among the numerous editions of Paine's writings, perhaps the best is Moncure D. Conway's (1894-1895). There are biographies by Conway, W. M. Van der Weyde, M. A. Best, Frank Smith, and W. E. Woodward (1945). There is a brilliant but perhaps not altogether sound character sketch of Paine in Gamaliel Bradford's *Damaged Souls* (1923). Harry Hayden Clark's *Thomas Paine: Representative Selections* (1944) contains a good bibliography and an illuminating introductory essay.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

from COMMON SENSE

(January, 1776)

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves: that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King and the Continent has accepted the challenge.

It hath been reported of the late Mr. Pelham (who tho' an able minister was not without his faults) that on his being attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were

only of a temporary kind, replied, "*they will last my time.*" Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the Colonies in the present contest, the name of ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The Sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a City, a County, a Province, or a Kingdom; but of a Continent—of at least one eighth part of the habitable Globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of Continental union, faith and honour. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new æra for politics is struck—a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, &c prior to the nineteenth of April, *i. e.* to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacks of the last year; which tho' proper then, are superseded and useless now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one and the same point, viz. a union with Great-Britain; the

only difference between the parties was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and the second hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and enquire into some of the many material injuries which these Colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with and dependant on Great-Britain. To examine that connection and dependance, on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependant.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America has flourished under her former connection with Great-Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the Continent at our expense as well as her own, is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, *viz.* for the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great-Britain, without considering that her motive was *interest*, not *attachment*; and that she did not protect us from *our enemies on our account*; but from *her enemies on her own account*, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, and who will always be our enemies on the *same account*. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the Continent, or the Continent throw

off the dependance, and we should be at peace with France and Spain, were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover[']s last war ought to warn us against connections.

5 It hath lately been asserted in parliament, that the Colonies have no relation to each other but through the Parent Country, *i. e.* that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister Colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very roundabout way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enmity (or enemyship, if I may so call it). France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be, our enemies as *Americans*, but as our being the *subjects of Great Britain*.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore, the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase *parent* or *mother country* hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new World hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from *every part* of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

15 In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudices, as we enlarge our acquaintance with the World. A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners (because their interests in many cases will be common) and distinguish him by the name of *neighbour*; if he meet him but a few miles from home, he drops the narrow idea of a street, and salutes him by the name of *townsman*; if he travel out of the county and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions

of street and town, and calls him *countryman*, *i. e. countyman*: but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France, or any other part of *Europe*, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of *Englishmen*. And by a just parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe, are *countrymen*; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger scale, which the divisions of street, town, and county do on the smaller ones; Distinctions too limited for Continental minds. Not one third of the inhabitants, even of this province [Pennsylvania], are of English descent. Wherefore, I reprobate the phrase of Parent or Mother Country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But, admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the Colonies, that in conjunction they might bid defiance to the world: But this is mere presumption; the fate of war is uncertain, neither do the expressions mean any thing; for this continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge; not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages which we sustain by that connection, are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instruct us to renounce the alliance: because, any submission to, or dependance on, Great Britain, tends directly to involve this Continent in European wars and quarrels, and set us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while, by her dependance on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with Kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, *because of her connection with Britain*. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality in that case would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of Heaven. The time likewise at which the Continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled, encreases the force of it. The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America: As if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent, is a form of government, which sooner or later must have an end: And a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction that what he calls "the present constitution" is merely temporary. As parents, we can have no joy, knowing that this government is not sufficiently lasting to ensure any thing which we may bequeath to posterity: And by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use

them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight.

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation, may be included within the following descriptions.

Interested men, who are not to be trusted, weak men who *cannot* see, prejudiced men who will not see, and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this Continent than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of present sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to their doors to make them feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by the soldiery if they leave it, in their present situation they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Great Britain, and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, *Come, come, we shall be friends again for all this*. But examine the passions and feelings of mankind: bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honour, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then are you only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honour, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse

more wretched than the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. 'Tis not in the power of Britain or of Europe to conquer America, if she doth not conquer herself by delay and timidity. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected the whole Continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man doth not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

'Tis repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples from former ages, to suppose that this Continent can long remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain doth not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan, short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is *now* a fallacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connection, and art cannot supply her place. For, as Milton wisely expresses, "never can true reconcilement grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and hath tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity or confirms obstinacy in Kings more than repeated petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more than that very measure to make the Kings of Europe absolute.

Witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again is idle and visionary; we thought so at the repeal of the stamp act, yet a year or two undeceived us; as well may we suppose that nations which have been once defeated will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, 'tis not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness. There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves are the proper objects for government to take under their care; but there is something absurd, in supposing a Continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems. England to Europe: America to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party, or resentment to espouse the doctrine of separation and independence; I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that it is the true interest of this Continent to be so; that every thing short of *that* is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity,—that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time when a little more, a little further, would have rendered this Continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the Continent, or any ways equal to the expence of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for, ought always to bear some just proportion to the expence. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience, which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole Continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, 'tis scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for, in a just estimation 'tis as great a folly to pay a Bunker-hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independancy of this continent, as an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the Continent to maturity, the event cannot be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest: otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the Continent. And that for several reasons.

First. The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the King, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this Continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper person to say to these colonies, *You shall make no laws but what I please?* And is there any inhabitant of America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the *present constitution*, this Continent can make no laws but what the king gives leave to; and is there any man so unwise as not to see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer no law to be made here but such as suits *his* purpose? We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by sub-

mitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it is called) can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this continent as low and humble as possible? Instead of going forward we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarreling, or ridiculously petitioning. We are already greater than the King wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter endeavor to make us less? To bring the matter to one point, Is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says *No*, to this question, is an Independent, for independency means no more than this, whether we shall make our own laws, or, whether the King, the greatest enemy this continent hath, or can have, shall tell us *there shall be no laws but such as I like*.

But the King, you will say, has a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, it is something very ridiculous that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people older and wiser than himself, "I forbid this or that act of yours to be law." But in this place I decline this sort of reply, though I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer that England being the King's residence, and America not so, makes quite another case. The King's negative here is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England; for there he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defense as possible, and in America he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics. England consults the good of this country no further than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a second hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name: And in order to show that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, *that it would be policy in the King at this time to repeal the acts, for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces; In order that HE MAY ACCOMPLISH BY CRAFT AND*

SUBTLETY, IN THE LONG RUN, WHAT HE CANNOT DO BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE IN THE SHORT ONE. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

Secondly. That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the Colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the interim will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance; and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the Continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independance, *i. e.* a Continental form of government, can keep the peace of the Continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable that it will be followed by a revolt some where or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity; (thousands more will probably suffer the same fate.) Those men have other feelings than us who have nothing suffered. All they now possess is liberty; what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service, and having nothing more to lose they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the Colonies, towards a British government will be like that of a youth who is nearly out of his time; they will care very little about her: And a government which cannot preserve the peace is no government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing; and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose power will be wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I believe spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independance, fearing that it would produce civil wars: It is but seldom that our first thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here; for there is ten times more to dread from a patched up connection than from independance. I make the sufferer's case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property de-

stroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby.

The Colonies have manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to Continental government, as is sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretence for his fears, on any other grounds, than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz., that one colony will be striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The Republics of Europe are all (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and Switzerland are without wars, foreign or domestic: Monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest: the crown itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers in instances where a republican government, by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake. - - -

from THE AGE OF REASON,
Part I (1793; 1794)

CHAPTER I. THE AUTHOR'S PROFESSION
OF FAITH

It has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon Religion. I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject; and, from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I had intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations; and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France, of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood and of everything appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary; lest, in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of

government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches—whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish—appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise. They have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to *qualify* himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive to morality than this?

Soon after I had published the pamphlet, COMMON SENSE, in America, I saw the exceeding

probability that a Revolution in the System of Government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that

until the system of government should be changed those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priest-craft would be detected, and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more. ---

PHILIP FRENEAU

1752-1832

... a man in every respect worthy to bear the title of "the father of American poetry."

—FRED LEWIS PATTEE, *The Poems of Philip Freneau* (1902), I, cxi.

Freneau, the leading poet of the Revolution, was born in New York of French Huguenot ancestry. When he was ten, the family moved to a large estate at Mount Pleasant near Middletown Point, New Jersey. Well prepared for college, he entered Princeton, "a hotbed of Whiggism," in 1768. He graduated in 1771, a classmate of H. H. Brackenridge, James Madison, and Aaron Burr. With Brackenridge he collaborated in writing a commencement poem, "The Rising Glory of America." In 1772 he was teaching school in Maryland with Brackenridge. During the Revolution he wrote many poems in behalf of the cause of the rebels. In 1780, returning from the West Indies, he was captured and kept for two months on a British vessel—a terrible experience which he described in "The British Prison Ship." From 1784 to 1789, when he retired and married Eleanor Forman, he was captain of a ship which traded along the Atlantic coast. He took part in various journalistic ventures. The best known of these was *The National Gazette*, which he edited, 1791-1793, and which caused George Washington to refer to him as "That rascal, Freneau." This organ of the Jeffersonians greatly irritated the Federalists, particularly Alexander Hamilton. From 1803 to 1807 Freneau was again a sea-captain. In later years he suffered from poverty and misfortune. He died on December 18, 1832, while trying to reach home at night during a violent snowstorm.

If Freneau's life had been spent in times of peace and plenty, he would have devoted himself entirely to poetry. He was well read in the classics and the British poets, and he had taste and talent. In him we find the first response to the growing Romantic Movement in

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD-----1765-1789

England and on the continent. But circumstances forced him to devote his pen largely to politics and satire. Nevertheless, some of his poems have sufficient vitality to make it worth while for the modern reader to know them.

There are two editions of Freneau's poems, neither complete: Fred Lewis Pattee, *The Poems of Philip Freneau* (3 vols., 1902), which contains a biographical and critical introduction; and Harry Hayden Clark, *Poems of Philip Freneau* (1929), which contains a useful discussion of the poems. The standard biography is Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau: A Study in Literary Failure* (1941). Professor Leary's *The Last Poems of Philip Freneau* (1945) consists of uncollected poems. See also Nelson F. Adkins, *Philip Freneau and the Cosmic Enigma* (1949). For further references, see Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

TO THE MEMORY OF THE BRAVE AMERICANS

UNDER GENERAL GREENE, IN SOUTH
CAROLINA, WHO FELL IN THE ACTION OF
SEPTEMBER 8, 1781

(1781)

At Eutaw Springs the valiant died;
Their limbs with dust are covered o'er—
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide;
How many heroes are no more!

If in this wreck of ruin, they
Can yet be thought to claim a tear,
O smite your gentle breast, and say
The friends of freedom slumber here!

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain,
If goodness rules thy generous breast,
Sigh for the wasted rural reign;
Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest!

Stranger, their humble graves adorn;
You too may fall, and ask a tear;
'Tis not the beauty of the morn
That proves the evening shall be clear.—

They saw their injured country's woe;
The flaming town, the wasted field;
Then rushed to meet the insulting foe;
They took the spear—but left the shield.

Led by thy conquering genius, Greene,
The Britons they compelled to fly;
None distant viewed the fatal plain,
None grieved, in such a cause to die—

But, like the Parthian, famed of old,
Who, flying, still their arrows threw,
These routed Britons, full as bold,
Retreated, and retreating slew.

5
Now rest in peace, our patriot band;
Though far from nature's limits thrown,
We trust they find a happier land,
A brighter sunshine of their own.

10 ARNOLD'S DEPARTURE (December, 1782)

When first published, this poem bore the title:
"The 10th Ode, Horace's Book of Epodes Imitated."
15 Written in December, 1781, upon the departure of
General Arnold from New-York."

With evil omens from the harbor sails
The ill-fated ship that worthless ARNOLD bears,
20 God of the southern winds, call up thy gales,
And whistle in rude fury round his ears.

With horrid waves insult his vessel's sides,
And may the east wind on a leeward shore
25 Her cables snap, while she in tumult rides,
And shatter into shivers every oar.

And let the north wind to her ruin haste,
With such a rage, as when from mountains
30 high
He rends the tall oak with his weighty blast,
And ruin spreads where'er his forces fly.

May not one friendly star that night be seen;
35 No Moon, attendant, dart one glimmering ray
Nor may she ride on oceans more serene
Than Greece, triumphant, found that stormy
day,

When angry Pallas spent her rage no more
 On vanquish'd Ilium, then in ashes laid,
 But turn'd it on the barque that Ajax bore,
 Avenging thus her temple, and the maid.

When toss'd upon the vast Atlantic main
 Your groaning ship the southern gales shall
 tear,
 How will your sailors sweat, and you complain
 And meanly howl to Jove, that will not hear!

But if, at last, upon some winding shore
 A prey to hungry cormorants you lie,
 A wanton goat to every stormy power,
 And a fat lamb, in sacrifice, shall die.

ON THE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

AND
 PEOPLING THE WESTERN COUNTRY
 (1784)

To western woods, and lonely plains,
Palemon from the crowd departs,
 Where Nature's wildest genius reigns,
 To tame the soil, and plant the arts—
 What wonders there shall freedom show,
 What mighty STATES successive grow!

From Europe's proud, despotic shores
 Hither the stranger takes his way,
 And in our new found world explores
 A happier soil, a milder sway,
 Where no proud despot holds him down
 No slaves insult him with a crown.

What charming scenes attract the eye,
 On wild Ohio's savage stream!
 There Nature reigns, whose works outvie
 The boldest pattern art can frame;
 There ages past have rolled away,
 And forests bloomed but to decay.

From these fair plains, these rural seats,
 So long concealed, so lately known,
 The unsocial Indian far retreats,
 To make some other clime his own,
 When other streams, less pleasing flow,
 And darker forests round him grow.

Great Sire¹ of floods! whose varied wave

¹ The Mississippi. (Author's note.)

Through climes and countries takes its way,
 To whom creating Nature gave
 Ten thousand streams to swell thy sway!
 No longer shall *they* useless prove,
 5 Nor idly through the forests rove;

Nor longer shall your princely flood
 From distant lakes be swelled in vain,
 Nor longer through a darksome wood
 10 Advance, unnoticed, to the main,
 Far other ends, the heavens decree—
 And commerce plans new freights for thee.

While virtue warms the generous breast,
 15 There heaven-born freedom shall reside,
 Nor shall the voice of war molest,
 Nor Europe's all-aspiring pride—
 There Reason shall new laws devise,
 And order from confusion rise.

20 Forsaking kings and regal state,
 With all their pomp and fancied bliss,
 The traveller owns, convinced though late,
 No realm so free, so blest as this—
 25 The east is half to slaves consigned,
 Where kings and priests enchain the mind.

O come the time, and haste the day,
 When man shall man no longer crush,
 30 When Reason shall enforce her sway,
 Nor these fair regions raise our blush,
 Where still the *African* complains,
 And mourns his yet unbroken chains.

35 Far brighter scenes a future age,
 The muse predicts, these States will hail,
 Whose genius may the world engage,
 Whose deeds may over death prevail,
 And happier systems bring to view,
 40 Than all the eastern sages knew.

THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

(1786)

45 Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
 Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
 Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
 50 Unseen thy little branches greet:
 No roving foot shall crush thee here,
 No busy hand provoke a tear.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD-----1765-1789

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
 She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
 And planted here the guardian shade,
 And sent soft waters murmuring by;
 Thus quietly thy summer goes,
 Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with these charms, that must decay,
 I grieve to see your future doom;
 They died—nor were those flowers more gay,
 The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
 Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power
 Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dew
 At first thy little being came:
 If nothing once, you nothing lose,
 For when you die you are the same;
 The space between, is but an hour,
 The frail duration of a flower.

TO AN AUTHOR

(1788)

Your leaves bound up compact and fair
 In neat array at length prepare
 To pass their hour on learning's stage,
 To meet the surly critic's rage;
 The statesman's slight, the smatterer's sneer—
 Were these, indeed, your only fear,
 You might be tranquil and resigned:
 What most should touch your fluttering mind
 Is that few critics will be found
 To sift your works, and deal the wound.

Thus, when one fleeting year is past
 On some bye-shelf *your* book is cast—
Another comes, with *something new*,
 And drives you fairly out of view:
 With some to praise, *but more to blame*,
 The mind returns to—whence it came;
 And some alive, who *scarce could read*
 Will publish satires on the dead.

Thrice happy Dryden, who could meet
 Some rival bard in every street!
 When all were bent on writing well
 It was some credit to excel!

Thrice happy Dryden, who could find
 A *Milbourne* for his sport designed—

And *Pope*, who saw the harmless rage
 Of *Dennis* bursting o'er his page,
 Might justly spurn the *critic's aim*,
 Who only helped to swell his fame.

- 5 On these bleak climes by Fortune thrown,
 Where rigid *Reason* reigns alone,
 Where lovely *Fancy* has no sway,
 Nor magic forms about us play,
 10 Nor nature takes her summer hue,
 Tell me, what has the muse to do?

- An age employed in edging steel
 Can no poetic raptures feel;
 15 Nor solitude's attracting power,
 No leisure of the noonday hour,
 No shaded stream, no quiet grove
 Can this fantastic century move.

- 20 The muse of love in no request—
 Go—try your fortune with the rest,
One of the nine you should engage,
 To meet the follies of the age.

- 25 On *one*, we fear, your choice must fall,
 The least engaging of them all;
 Her visage stern—an angry style—
 A clouded brow—malicious smile—
 A mind on *murdered victims* placed—
 30 She, only she, can please the taste!

THE INDIAN BURYING GROUND

(1788)

- 35 "The North American Indians bury their dead in
 a sitting posture; decorating the corpse with wam-
 pum, the images of birds, quadrupeds, &c: And (if
 that of a warrior) with bows, arrows, tomahawks
 and other military weapons" (Freneau's note). Wil-
 40 liam Bartram describes the custom in his *Travels*.

In spite of all the learned have said,
 I still my old opinion keep;
 The *posture*, that *we* give the dead,
 Points out the soul's eternal sleep.

- 45 Not so the ancients of these lands—
 The Indian, when from life released,
 Again is seated with his friends,
 And shares again the joyous feast.
 50

His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
 And venison, for a journey dressed,

Bespeak the nature of the soul,
ACTIVITY, that knows no rest.

His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.

Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,
No fraud upon the dead commit—
Observe the swelling turf, and say
They do not *lie*, but here they *sit*.

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an aged elm aspires,
Beneath whose far-projecting shade
(And which the shepherd still admires)
The children of the forest played!

There oft a restless Indian queen
(Pale *Shebah*, with her braided hair)
And many a barbarous form is seen
To chide the man that lingers there.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer, a shade!²

And long shall timorous fancy see
The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
To shadows and delusions here.

THE REPUBLICAN GENIUS OF EUROPE (1795)

Emperors and kings! in vain you strive
Your torments to conceal—
The age is come that shakes your thrones,
Tramples in dust despotic crowns,
And bids the sceptre fail.

² The Scotch poet, Thomas Campbell, borrowed this line and used it in his "O'Connor's Child."

In western worlds the flame began:
From thence to France it flew—
Through Europe, now, it takes its way,
Beams an insufferable day,
5 And lays all tyrants low.

Genius of France! pursue the chace
Till Reason's laws restore
Man to be Man, in every clime;—
10 That Being, active, great, sublime
Debas'd in dust no more.

In dreadful pomp he takes his way
O'er ruin'd crowns, demolish'd thrones—
15 Pale tyrants shrink before his blaze—
Round him terrific lightnings play—
With eyes of fire, he looks them through,
Crushes the vile despotic crew,
And Pride in ruin lays.

ON A HONEY BEE

DRINKING FROM A GLASS OF WINE AND
DROWNED THEREIN

(1809)

25 This excellent bit of light verse possibly owes something to Thomas Gray's poem, "On the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes."

30 Thou, born to sip the lake or spring,
Or quaff the waters of the stream,
Why hither come on vagrant wing?—
Does Bacchus tempting seem—
Did he, for you, this glass prepare?—
35 Will I admit you to a share?

Did storms harass or foes perplex,
Did wasps or king-birds bring dismay—
Did wars distress, or labors vex,
40 Or did you miss your way?—
A better seat you could not take
Than on the margin of this lake.

Welcome!—I hail you to my glass:
45 All welcome, here, you find;
Here let the cloud of trouble pass,
Here, be all care resigned.—
This fluid never fails to please,
And drown the griefs of men or bees.

50

What forced you here, we cannot know,
And you will scarcely tell—

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD-----1765-1789

But cheery we would have you go
And bid a glad farewell:
On lighter wings we bid you fly,
Your dart will now all foes defy.

Yet take not, oh! too deep a drink,
And in this ocean die;
Here bigger bees than you might sink,
Even bees full six feet high.

Like Pharaoh, then, you would be said
To perish in a sea of red.

5 Do as you please, your will is mine;
Enjoy it without fear—
And your grave will be this glass of wine,
Your epitaph—a tear—
Go, take your seat in Charon's boat,
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat.

III

NATIONALISM
AND
ROMANTICISM

1789 - 1830

NATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM

1789 - 1830

... these were in effect the problems that [in 1800] lay before American society: Could it transmute its social power into the higher forms of thought? Could it provide for the moral and intellectual needs of mankind? Could it take permanent political shape? Could it give new life to religion and art? Could it create and maintain in the mass of mankind those habits of mind which had hitherto belonged to men of science alone? Could it physically develop the convolutions of the human brain? Could it produce, or was it compatible with, the differentiation of a higher variety of the human race? Nothing less than this was necessary for its complete success.

—HENRY ADAMS, *History of the United States* (1889-1891), I, 184.

The thirteen colonies, with their widely differing traditions, did not become a nation overnight. In fact, until 1865 it was open to question whether the States were in the full sense of the word a nation. In 1783 the States had no national culture, no national religion, no national system of education, no language exclusively their own, no strong bond of common traditions, no fully developed national point of view toward anything. They did not even have a strong central government. They were not a nation but a confederation of emancipated provinces, an aggregation of geographical sections. In every sphere of thought—with the partial exception of the political—they were still colonially minded. In 1783 men were more likely to refer to themselves as Pennsylvanians or Virginians than as Americans. In the South allegiance to the state continued primary until after the Civil War. In the North it gave way slowly to a feeling that the nation came first and the state and section second. It was long before Americans ceased to say, "The United States *are*," and learned to say, "The United States *is*." The employment of the singular verb, illogical as it may seem, symbolizes an immense change in the American point of view since 1783.

In our own day of disappearing state lines, one is likely to underrate the strength of provincial forces a century and more ago. On January 28, 1813, John Adams wrote to Elbridge Gerry:

"How shall we cure that distemper of the mind, State vanity? You know to what a degree the ancient dominion [Virginia] was infected with it, and how many sacri-

fices we have been obliged to make to it. You remember how Pennsylvania had it. Pennsylvania was 'first in arts and arms!' Philadelphia was 'the heart of the Union!' so said George Ross. Dr. Lyman Hall, of Georgia, readily acknowledged that she was the heart, because we know that 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' Now New York is to be placed at the head. Our poor old tame, good-natured pussy Massachusetts, who has the distemper in her heart deeper than any of them, has been obliged to turn and flatter, to dissimulate and to simulate, in plain English, as Governor Hopkins once said, or rather was accused of saying, to coax, lie, and flatter in order to carry her points, and save herself from perdition."

The strength of sectional prejudice a century ago is today difficult to realize. This is particularly true of New England and the South. In these sections prejudice against the other goes back to the days of William Byrd and Cotton Mather. The few intelligent and open-minded Virginians who visited New England were astonished to discover that they had been misled by sectional prejudice, and the New Englanders who visited Virginia were often greatly pleased with what they saw. While tutoring in Richmond in 1798, William Ellery Channing wrote:

"I blush for my own people, when I compare the selfish prudence of a Yankee with the generous confidence of a Virginian. . . . There is one single trait which attaches me to the people I live with, more than all the virtues of New England. They *love money less* than we do. They are more disinterested. Their patriotism is not tied to their purse-strings. Could I only take away from the Virginians their *sensuality* and their *slaves*, I should think them the greatest people in the world."

Parenthetically, we may add a passage from a letter written from Virginia by A. Bronson Alcott, who in his youth spent four years in the South as a peddler: "Hospitality is a most distinguishing trait of the Virginia people, rich and poor; and their polished manners and agreeable conversation ingratiate the traveller at once in their favor. The planters are an educated class, gentlemen in the best sense of the word."

In 1829 William Wirt, a distinguished Virginia lawyer, went to Boston on business. On August 3 of that year he wrote to his friend, Judge Dabney Carr:

". . . I think the people of Boston amongst the most agreeable in the United States. I suppose their kindness to me may have some effect on my judgment;—but, divesting myself of this, as much as possible, I say they are as warm-hearted, as kind, as frank, as truly hospitable as the Virginians themselves. In truth, they are Virginians in all the essentials of character. They speak and pronounce as we do, and their sentiments are very much in the same strain. Their literary improvement, as a mass, is much superior to ours. I expected to find them cold, shy and suspicious. I found them, on the contrary, open, playful and generous. They have no foreign mixture among them,—but are the native population, the original English and their descendants. . . . —Would to Heaven the people of Virginia and Massachusetts, knew each other better! What a host of absurd and repulsive prejudices would that knowledge put to flight! How would it tend to consolidate the Union, threatened as it is, with so many agents of dissolution . . . What a fool have I been to join in these vulgar prejudices against the Yankees! We judged them by their pedlers. It would be as just if they were to judge us by our black-legs."

II

The first great need was a strong central government that would make American independence secure and provide some machinery for putting into effect the ideals for which the Revolution had been fought. The convention which framed the federal Constitution, displacing the loose and ineffective Articles of Confederation, met in Philadelphia in 1787. With the inauguration of Washington as President in 1789, under the new Constitution, the future of the new nation began to look more nearly secure to Americans. In Europe, however, few expected the Union to endure.

During Washington's administration the two divergent theories of government which have ever since divided the American people became articulate and were incorporated in political parties. Alexander Hamilton, the leader of the Federalists, and Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Democratic Republican party, were both members of Washington's cabinet.

Hamilton, partly French by ancestry, was born in the British West Indies. His marriage into the prominent Schuyler family of New York probably had much to do with his social and economic sympathies. He thought the Constitution far from ideal—he would, in fact, have preferred a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain—but he was willing to do what he could “to prop the frail and worthless fabric.” In the Constitutional Convention he had said:

“Take mankind as they are, and what are they governed by? Their passions. . . . Our prevailing passions are ambition and interest; and it will ever be the duty of a wise government to avail itself of those passions in order to make them subservient to the public good. . . . All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born; the other the mass of people. . . . turbulent and changing, they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the Government.”

Even today, in spite of Hamilton's great services to the young nation, most Americans find it difficult to forgive him his untactful remark at a New York dinner, in reply to some democratic sentiment, “Your people, sir,—your people is a great *beast!*” It was Hamilton's policy to attach to the new government “the rich and well-born”; that was the method by which as Secretary of the Treasury he hoped “to prop the frail and worthless fabric.”

Washington's Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, was not the vulgar demagogue he was often considered by his political opponents. He came of a good Virginia family, had been well educated, had traveled extensively, and probably knew more of world affairs than any other American of his time. Jefferson had grown up on the Virginia border—what was then the “West”—and the frontier democracy in the midst of which he lived had more to do with his democratic political views than had his years in France. In political matters the cosmopolitan Jefferson was markedly anti-English, even anti-European. “Nothing,” he said, “is so important as that America shall separate herself from the systems of Europe, and establish one of her own.” In the social sense Jefferson was hardly what we should today call a thoroughgoing democrat; using the term in a political sense, we should call him a democrat in comparison with Hamilton or Adams but not with Andrew Jackson or Abraham Lincoln.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Jefferson never lost the idealism he had written

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into the Declaration of Independence. As Governor of Virginia during the Revolution, he had been instrumental in establishing religious freedom, in disestablishing the Anglican Church, and in abolishing the laws of primogeniture and entail which held together the great planter estates of Virginia. In his old age he described the situation which he found when in 1790 he returned from France to take a place in Washington's cabinet:

"I found a state of things, in the general society of the place [Philadelphia], which I could not have supposed possible. . . . The revolution I had left, and that we had just gone through in the recent change of our government, being the common topics of conversation, I was astonished to find the general prevalence of monarchical sentiments, insomuch that in maintaining those of republicanism, I had always the whole company on my hands, never scarcely finding among them a single co-advocate in that argument. . . . The furthest that any one would go, in support of the republican features of our new government, would be to say, 'the present constitution is well as a beginning, and may be allowed a fair trial; but it is, in fact, only a stepping-stone to something better.'"

For a time the Federalists had things much their own way, but after a long and bitter struggle Jefferson succeeded John Adams as President in 1801. At that time many of his followers said, "The Revolution is now complete"; but Jefferson's administration proved to be not at all a radical one. It was left to Andrew Jackson and his combination of Western Democrats and Eastern working-men to bring about in 1829 something nearer the ideal stated in the Declaration of Independence.

III

The United States was, even in 1830, still predominantly rural and agricultural. The industrial, or economic, revolution, which has since gone far toward changing not only our way of life but also our psychology and national character, was only beginning in this period. New England was becoming a manufacturing section. In addition to shipbuilding, cotton and woolen factories were becoming important industries. Voyages to the Pacific and even to the Far East were not uncommon. The whaling industry, to be memorably portrayed in Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), was already a huge enterprise. Henry Clay's "American System," combining internal improvements with a high protective tariff, was an expression of the national desire to be economically as well as politically independent of Europe. New inventions, like the steamboat (the locomotive came somewhat later), made easier the problem of travel and transportation in the sparsely settled country. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 facilitated the marketing of western crops and the migration of Easterners to the West; and it stimulated the development of New York as America's greatest seaport. Meanwhile Eli Whitney's invention, the cotton gin, gave a tremendous impulse to the expansion of the Gulf States and, incidentally, increased the demand for slaves.

Political and economic changes were accompanied by important social developments. There was a marked decline in the old aristocracy. The Revolution had ruined many wealthy and cultured families. The leveling tendencies in all the states, even in the South, carried the idea of equality over into social and economic matters. In the industrial dis-

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tricts one could see the beginnings of a new class, the plutocracy, which cared more for money than for birth, breeding, or culture. Foreign observers were impressed by widespread vulgarity and ostentation. The tempo of American life was changing throughout the North and West, and the leisurely manner of Colonial days was, outside the South, giving way to the tension that marks the American of today.

In spite of the wide diversity of the states, European observers who visited the country in this period agreed that the American character was something distinct and individual; it was no longer English. In *The English Traveller in America, 1780-1835* (1922), Miss Jane L. Mesick notes some of the American characteristics pointed out by British travelers: "acute sensitiveness to opinion," "self-confidence and independence which were noticed in all classes and ages of people," "a certain conservatism in American ideas, a kind of holding back from that which was new and strange," "the undeniable fondness for titles of all kinds," "the reputation for being a money-loving and money-getting people," "the lack of local attachment," "the greatest kindness," "patience and good humor," a "spirit of equality," reserve toward strangers, and a certain stiffness and lack of ease in American society. The travelers were impressed and often offended by the national vanity. John Bristed, who lived some years in this country, wrote in *The Resources of the United States* (1818):

"The *national vanity* of the United States surpasses that of any other country, not even excepting France. It blazes out every where, and on all occasions—in their conversation, newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, and books. They assume it as a self-evident fact, that the Americans surpass all other nations in virtue, wisdom, valour, liberty, government, and every other excellence. All Europeans they profess to despise, as ignorant paupers and dastardly slaves. Even during President Washington's administration, Congress debated three days upon the important position that 'America was the *most enlightened* nation on earth'; and finally decided the affirmative by a small majority."

The general impression made upon foreign observers was that a large percentage of Americans could read but that few of them read anything but newspapers. The American faith in education was growing and finding expression in the founding of colleges and the promotion of public schools. There was, however, no national university, though George Washington in his will had left a sum to be used toward establishing such an institution. Washington, like many others, feared that Americans who attended European universities would be corrupted by the political opinions of the Old World. The curriculum of even the better colleges was comparable to that of present-day preparatory schools. After the Second War with England we find a few exceptional American students going to German universities, then the best in Europe: George Ticknor, Edward Everett, George Bancroft, and Emerson's older brother William.

IV

The nineteenth century inherited from the eighteenth an idea destined to be peculiarly influential in America: the idea of progress. This concept, unknown to antiquity, was developed in the Age of Enlightenment, which took a hopeful view of the nature and destiny of man. It was a favorite theme of the French *philosophes*, whose writings influ-

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enced Americans, particularly Franklin, Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, all of whom lived for a time in France. Franklin wrote to Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, in 1780:

“The rapid Progress *true* Science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the Height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the Power of Man over Matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large Masses of their Gravity, and give them absolute Levity, for the sake of easy Transport. Agriculture may diminish its Labour and double its Produce; all Diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting even that of Old Age, and our Lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian Standard. O that moral Science were in as fair a way of Improvement, that Men would cease to be Wolves to one another, and that human Beings would at length learn what they now improperly call Humanity!”

Americans, so foreign observers said, boasted little of their past but much of their country's future. The rapid expansion of the nation in territory, population, and wealth encouraged a belief in the “manifest destiny” of the United States. Progress seemed a law of nature. In the later nineteenth century the Darwinian theory of evolution was to be interpreted optimistically to confirm the belief in continual progress, which lies back of much of the writing of Emerson and Whitman. In the twentieth century the belief in inevitable progress has been badly shaken by financial depressions, two world wars, fear of the atomic bomb, and the decline of western Europe.

The idea of progress was intimately related to the concept of civilization, which was formulated by Condorcet shortly before his death during the French Revolution. Condorcet rejected the traditional notion that history moves in circles or cycles and saw the future as a new epoch set in motion in part by the American Revolution. He knew the writings of Jefferson and Paine, and his own work was quickly known in this country. (See Charles and Mary Beard, *The American Spirit: A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States*, 1942.)

To Americans there was something new and different in the civilization of the United States. They felt that America had inherited the best which the Old World had created and had left behind in Europe institutions and customs not suited to the future. With its vast resources and its new philosophy of government, they felt, the United States represented fundamentally a higher order of civilization. Our British critics naturally ridiculed the notion that a country which had not thus far produced great writers, thinkers, artists, or scientists should set itself up as superior to an “effete” Europe, the nursery of civilization. American writers, however, in the main believed that our civilization represented an irreparable break with the European past and held out the best hope of the world for the future. Even those Americans who visited Europe returned with a stronger conviction of the intrinsic worth of the American civilization. They were less inclined than our writers of today to see civilization in the United States as primarily an extension of the civilization of western Europe, and they exaggerated the uniqueness of our situation.

V

One finds in America in this period no such fortunate conjunction of economic, social, and cultural forces as have marked the great literary periods of the European world. Men

with the leisure, intelligence, and training necessary to a full understanding and appreciation of art or literature were a very small minority; and until after the Civil War they were to be found chiefly in the larger cities on the Atlantic seaboard and on scattered Southern plantations. Culturally, the Americans were further behind in 1789 than they had been in 1775. The younger generation had not had adequate educational opportunities; many cultured and well-to-do families had been reduced to poverty. Perhaps the greatest loss was that of the Loyalists, many of whom came from the more intelligent classes of the seaboard cities.

The attempt to produce masterpieces of literature and art in a democratic society and to make them carry democratic ideas to the common people was something new in the late eighteenth-century world. From the earliest known times the arts and literature had been associated with royalty and aristocracy or with religious institutions. Although the artist himself was usually not of aristocratic birth, he was dependent for his living upon a prince, a lord, or some high ecclesiastical dignitary. In the nineteenth century, following the American lead, artists in Europe were slowly to exchange their aristocratic patrons for the still uncertain support of the public. In literature this process had gone somewhat further than in music, painting, or sculpture. This was due in large part to the circumstance that books were comparatively cheap and could be reproduced in large numbers. A mechanic could buy a book, but he could not afford to have his portrait done in oils or employ a sculptor to model in marble the head of a favorite child or perhaps even buy a ticket to a concert. If the American achievement in literature somewhat overshadows our accomplishments in the other arts, improvements in the printing and distribution of books are one reason. Another is probably that the English people, from whom we inherit our literary traditions, have always excelled in literature, rarely in the other arts.

This country has established no pensions or patents of nobility for distinguished artists or writers, like Samuel Johnson and Alfred Tennyson. It has, however, given many diplomatic appointments to its writers—Irving was one of the earliest—but such positions are no sinecures. Our state and national governments were slow to employ sculptors and painters to decorate our public buildings. Furthermore, training in the arts is a slow and expensive process, and in the early years of the Republic it seemed necessary for the youthful artist to go to Europe for instruction. In this country art schools and museums were only beginning to come into existence, and there were no fellowships for study abroad. There was little to tempt a successful European artist to try his fortune in America. At the end of the Revolutionary War Benjamin Franklin, then in France, wrote in "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America":

"The Truth is, that though there are in that Country few People so miserable as the Poor in Europe, there are also very few that in Europe would be called Rich; it is rather a general happy Mediocrity that prevails. There are few great Proprietors of the Soil, and few Tenants; most People cultivate their own Lands, or follow some Handicraft or Merchandise; very few [are] rich enough to live idly upon their Rents or Incomes, or to pay the high Prices given in Europe for Paintings, Statues, Architecture, and the other Works of Art, that are more curious than useful. Hence the natural Geniuses, that have arisen in America with such Talents, have uniformly quitted that Country for Europe, where they can be more suitably rewarded."

In spite of the situation which Franklin describes, there were American artists who remained in this country throughout the Revolution and some who put their democratic sympathies into their artistic product. With the rapid increase in wealth and population of this country, artists have slowly been able to make for themselves a place in American society and gradually they learned to use their art to express American ideas and to portray American life.

In some of the fine arts Americans had made a beginning during the Colonial period; but sculpture, apart from the work of wood carvers, hardly existed. When a demand arose for statues of great Americans to adorn public buildings, it was necessary to import European sculptors like Houdon, who supplied Virginia and North Carolina with statues of Washington. A certain prudishness that arose in the late eighteenth century combined with a Puritan hostility to art to handicap the artist who wished to represent the nude. Robert E. Pine, who had brought to this country a plaster cast of the Venus de Medici, was not permitted to keep it in a studio where it could be seen. Philadelphia became excited when Nicholas Biddle presented to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts replicas of some of the famous sculptures in the Louvre. One day in each week the nude figures were ordered draped in muslin so that women visitors would not be shocked. Some Americans professed to be shocked because John Vanderlyn had painted the sleeping Ariadne as nude. On the other hand, Americans did not want their heroes dressed in the prosaic garments they had actually worn; and so Horatio Greenough, commissioned to make a statue of Washington for the Capitol, draped his figure in a Roman toga.

Before the Revolution our painters had excelled in portraiture, and the tradition continued. Early in the nineteenth century the French painter David asked Rembrandt Peale: "How is it that all the great portraits of the English school are by Americans?" Not all were, of course, but Benjamin West was still a leading figure in London, and many Americans studied under him. Among them were Gilbert Stuart, John Trumbull (not to be confused with the poet of the same name), Washington Allston, Charles Willson Peale and his son Rembrandt, Thomas Sully, Edward G. Malbone the miniature painter, William Dunlap the dramatist and historian of American art, and two men now far better known for their inventions: Robert Fulton and Samuel F. B. Morse. On the eve of the Revolution John Singleton Copley, sympathizing with the mother country, had left Boston to go to England. About the same time Charles Willson Peale, born in Maryland, left England, where he was studying art, to recross the Atlantic and share his country's fate. His best-known work is his fourteen portraits of George Washington. The most famous portraits of Washington are of course those painted by Gilbert Stuart, who remained in England during the Revolution but returned some years later partly because he wanted to paint the now aged Washington. Artistically, his portraits are perhaps better than Peale's, but Peale's paintings give one a better conception of the great soldier whose skill, fortitude, and patience saw the long war to a victorious conclusion. Another well-known American painter, John Trumbull, once remarked that in this country the artist could not look to the church or to legislative bodies for his support and consequently was "necessarily dependent upon the protection of the rich and great." Trumbull, however, received one of the few important governmental commissions. He was asked to enlarge four of his historical paintings for the rotunda in the Capitol in Washington.

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The portrait painters showed little interest in the American landscape, but in the intensely nationalistic period following the second war with Great Britain the so-called Hudson River School undertook to produce pictures in oil comparable to what Irving, Cooper, and Bryant were doing in poetry and prose. The painters were somewhat literary in their tastes, and one of them, Thomas Cole, received a poetic tribute from Bryant. Irving also was interested in painting. He was the friend of Charles Robert Leslie and of Allston, who almost persuaded him to abandon the law for painting, and he chose his pseudonym "Geoffrey Crayon" to indicate his indebtedness to the pictorial art. Other members of the group—if we may call it that—were Thomas Doughty and Asher B. Durand. Their work was to be continued by John Frederick Kensett, Frederick E. Church, and others in the mid-nineteenth century. They painted, however, not only the Hudson River country but also the White Mountains and eventually scenes as remote as the Rocky Mountains and even the Andes. The Hudson River School is now out of fashion and its artistic attainments were never very great, but it did turn the attention of painters to the artistic possibilities of their own country.

The period we are studying was marked by the Greek Revival in architecture. In Revolutionary France and in America it was felt that the simplicity and symmetry of Greek temples harmonized with democratic institutions. Thomas Jefferson, last and greatest of our amateur architects, built Monticello, designed for friends like James Monroe other beautiful houses, and sent from France drawings of the *Maison Carrée* to serve as model for the Virginia state capitol. The published drawings of Andrea Palladio, who had studied Roman and Greek remains, supplied suggestions which builders used again and again. Stately houses with columns and porches began to spring up on Southern plantations, eventually to be mistakenly called Colonial. After Washington had been burned by the British, Charles Bulfinch rebuilt the Capitol, originally designed by William Thornton. Among Bulfinch's pupils were Robert Mills, who built houses in Charleston and designed the Washington Monument in Baltimore and the Treasury Building in Washington, and William Strickland, who designed the Tennessee capitol in Nashville and the Merchants Exchange and the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia.

As time passed and the country grew more prosperous, the taste for fine furniture and art objects increased. When an English admirer presented Washington with a beautiful Italian mantel, the statesman exclaimed: "I greatly fear that it is too elegant and costly for my room and republican style of living," but he became greatly attached to it. A considerable amount of fine furniture was imported from Europe, but the work of native craftsmen was comparable to that of Europeans. American furniture makers used to good effect the printed style books of Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and the brothers Adam. An American designer of great talent was Duncan Phyfe, who made cabinets and other articles for well-to-do Knickerbocker families. After Waterloo put an end to the Napoleonic Wars, the Empire style began to be popular in this country. Toward the middle of the century taste in furniture and architecture notably declined, and it was not until the twentieth century that the general public became aware of the high quality of the work of early American builders and furniture makers.

Until very recently the United States could hardly be described as a musical nation. In 1922 Deems Taylor referred to America with some over-emphasis as a nation which

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spent millions upon an art which it could not produce. In the years 1789-1830 the day of great symphony orchestras and operatic companies was still in the future. Our cities were too few and too far apart and the economic level was too low to encourage musicians to make ambitious plans. There were, however, the beginnings of such things. A French company in New Orleans performed operas not only there but in other Southern cities. In New York Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* was produced in 1819 only six months after London and Paris had seen it; and Portland, Maine, had a Beethoven society in the same year, eight years before the great composer's death. These events were of course exceptional. The masses of the people sang the traditional hymns—a few were now being written by Timothy Dwight and other divines. There was a wealth of English and Scottish ballads and songs still sung in rural communities, but no one yet thought it worth his while to collect them or the Negro spirituals and "sinful songs" sung on Southern plantations. The music teacher seen most frequently was still the itinerant singer of psalms and hymns with his tuning fork. In the churches, however, the prejudice against instrumental music and choir singing was beginning to die out. In another generation Stephen Collins Foster would be composing his "Ethiopian" melodies and Lowell Mason would be writing some of the best of American hymns.

The American theater, which we have neglected to discuss in earlier chapters, had its beginnings early in the eighteenth century. Perhaps the first professional performance was given in Charleston, which has a distinguished theatrical history, in 1703 when Anthony Aston, a strolling English player, put on some plays and "wrote one Play on the Subject of the Country." An important event was the coming in 1752 to Williamsburg, which had a playhouse before 1720, of Lewis Hallam with a group of professionals who played there for eleven months before going on to New York and Philadelphia. Religious opposition from the Quakers and evangelical churches was great, particularly in New England, but it lessened with the passing of time. The first American tragedy, *The Prince of Parthia*, by Thomas Godfrey of Philadelphia, was acted before the Revolution; it was printed in 1765, two years after the poet's death. During the Revolution, although Congress tried to prevent theatrical performances, plays were written and acted by both Tories and patriots. Among the playwrights were Mrs. Mercy Otis Warren, Hugh Henry Brackenridge the novelist, and Robert Munford, a Virginia planter and soldier, whose *The Patriots* is one of the best of our early plays. The first notable American comedy to be produced was Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, performed in New York in 1787. In this play, which ridicules Americans who ape the British, appears Jonathan, the first of a long line of Yankee comic figures. The success of *The Contrast* stimulated William Dunlap (1766-1839) to write the first of his many plays. One of the best of these, *André*, was produced in 1798. Besides his plays, Dunlap wrote *A History of the American Theatre* (1832), *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (1834), and *A Life of Charles Brockden Brown* (1815). The nationalist movement affected the drama as it did other forms of literature. The most important of the playwrights who undertook to portray American life was James Nelson Barker (1784-1858), who in *The Indian Princess* (produced and published in 1808) wrote the first of many American plays dealing with the aborigines. Barker's *Superstition*, produced in 1824, deals in part with the regicide story later used by Hawthorne in "The Gray Champion." John Howard Payne (1791-1852) had a varied life as actor

and playwright in both Europe and America but is remembered chiefly as the author of "Home, Sweet Home" (from *Clari*, 1823). The first notable actors in this country were English professionals, but early in the nineteenth century Americans like Payne, James H. Hackett, and Edwin Forrest began to compete on equal terms with their English rivals. One who follows our theatrical history will soon note that our actors have, certainly until the twentieth century, been almost uniformly better than our dramatists. The nineteenth-century theater had a huge repertory of British plays going back to Shakespeare. In the absence of an international copyright law there was nothing to prevent the producer from putting on English or French or German plays without paying any royalty to the author. This situation was to prevail until 1891.

VI

The outlook for American literature in 1789 was not promising. With the exception of Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), the important writers of the period were all born after Yorktown. Irving was born in 1783, Cooper in 1789, Bryant in 1794. There was a loud outcry for a national literature, but little other incentive to a literary career. There were not enough persons with leisure, taste, training, and money to constitute a large enough reading public to justify a writer in trying to make a living by his pen. In 1790 there were only six cities with a population of eight thousand or over: Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston, Baltimore, and Salem. With few exceptions, no author, until after the Civil War, was able to live on returns from his writings. Even today there are reputable authors who, like Bryant, cannot make a living from literature. At the beginning of the nineteenth century John Quincy Adams gave up his dream of a literary career as impossible. On Christmas Day, 1820, he wrote in his diary: "Literature has been the charm of my life, and, could I have carved out my own fortunes, to literature would my whole life have been devoted. I have been a lawyer for bread, and a statesman at the call of my country. . . . The summit of my ambition would have been by some great work of literature to have done honor to my age and country, and to have lived in the gratitude of future ages. This consummation of happiness has been denied me." As late as 1825 Thomas Jefferson wrote:—"Literature is not yet a distinct profession with us. Now and then a strong mind arises, and at its intervals of leisure from business, emits a flash of light. But the first object of young societies is bread and covering; science is but secondary and subsequent."

At the close of the Revolution there was no national copyright law. Noah Webster found it necessary to travel to the various states in order to secure from the various legislative bodies legal protection for his books. Even after the adoption of national legislation, there was until 1891 no international copyright law. American publishers naturally preferred to reprint, without payment of royalty, the works of popular British writers. The American author, even when a successful one, found it impossible to prevent British publishers from reprinting his works. The injustice done to British authors like Scott and Byron is obvious, but the effect upon American letters was almost disastrous. No greater handicap could be imagined to the budding literature of the recently emancipated colonies. In this period comes our first great publisher, Matthew Carey (1760-1839), Irish by birth, who was of

great service in printing American books and periodicals. Yet he, too, took an active part in the pirating of British publications.

Under these conditions it is not surprising that a large proportion of American writing appeared in pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines, and some of the best of it was slow in being republished in book form. In *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850* (1930), Professor F. L. Mott thus sums up the period from 1794 to 1825:

"A summary of the Period of Nationalism in American magazine history must at least point out the facts that magazines of many kinds greatly increased in number, especially in the twenties; that there was a marked development of class periodicals, notably those devoted to religion; that politics occupied a large share of magazine energy to the detriment of *belles-lettres*; that weekly magazines of all kinds were prominent; that financial success was almost unknown to magazine publishers and editors; and that, in spite of large borrowings from English and other sources, there was a loud and insistent demand for a peculiarly American literature."

Among the more important magazines were: the *North American Review* (1815-1940), in which some of Bryant's best poems first appeared; Joseph Dennie's *Port Folio* (1801-1827); the *Portico* (1816-1818), of Baltimore; and the *Southern Review* (1828-1832), of Charleston. Students who are able to examine a file of some early American magazines will find it more enlightening than reading many pages of discussion at second-hand.

Nearly two centuries after the founding of Jamestown, America had produced little writing of intrinsic literary importance. Franklin's *Autobiography* was our only classic. The Revolution of course had brought a really significant political literature, but in the field of *belles-lettres* there was little that anyone but the special student reads today, little that an intelligent Englishman need read either at that time or this. In 1783 certain important literary types—the novel, the short story, and the drama—were almost non-existent in America.

Down to the end of the nineteenth century one notes a tendency on the part of American literature to lag behind European literary fashions. Irving impressed Hazlitt as a belated eighteenth-century writer. The Romantic Movement had passed its peak in England before the significant work of our New England writers appeared. Our Romantic Movement almost coincides with the Victorian period in England; so that in a sense, as Norman Foerster has pointed out, we have not had anything quite like the literature of Victorian England. In more recent times Bernard Shaw has satirized "the dumbfounding staleness" of American culture in his portrait of Hector Malone in *Man and Superman*. "To this culture," writes Shaw, "he finds English people either totally indifferent, as they commonly are to all culture, or else politely evasive, the truth being that Hector's culture is nothing but a state of saturation with our literary exports of thirty years ago, reimported by him to be unpacked at a moment's notice and hurled at the head of English literature, science and art, at every conversational opportunity."

VII

An important factor in the literary history of the early nineteenth century was the American demand for a national literature. The desire for a literature dealing with the American scene was a perfectly natural one; something like it is found in all countries

and certainly in all sections of America. But there were other reasons why at the close of the Revolutionary War the demand for a national literature was loud and insistent. There was a strong feeling that English literature was undemocratic, not suitable for the training of young Americans. England was now a foreign nation. What was needed was a literature based upon the American idea. There was the feeling that political independence called for independence in all cultural and intellectual matters. The desire for a national literature was accentuated by the hostility of British travelers and reviewers. Before and after the War of 1812—which made Americans more nationalistic in feeling than ever—there was waged what has been called the “paper war” between America and England. Irving’s “English Writers on America” is one of the few things written on the subject that is still remembered. Of all that the British reviewers said about America, practically everything has been forgotten except Sydney Smith’s question, “Who reads an American book?” This question was one of a number which appeared in an article published in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1820. After indulging in some restrained praise for the Americans, Smith, who was more friendly than most of our British critics, wrote:

“Thus far, we the friends and admirers of Jonathan: But he must not grow vain and ambitious; or allow himself to be dazzled by that galaxy of epithets by which his orators and newspaper scribblers endeavour to persuade their supporters that they are the greatest, the most refined, the most enlightened, and the most moral people upon earth. The effect of this is unspeakably ludicrous on this side of the Atlantic—and, even on the other, we should imagine, must be rather humiliating to the reasonable part of the population. The Americans are a brave, industrious, and acute people; but they have hitherto given no indications of genius, and made no approaches to the heroic, either in their morality or character. They are but a recent offset indeed from England; and should make it their chief boast, for many generations to come, that they are sprung from the same race with Bacon and Shakespeare and Newton. . . . In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture or statue? What does the world yet owe to American physicians and surgeons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? Or what old ones have they analysed? What new constellations have been discovered by the telescopes of Americans? What have they done in the mathematics? Who drinks out of American glasses? Or eats from American plates? or wears American coats or gowns? or sleeps in American blankets?—Finally, under which of the old tyrannical governments of Europe is every sixth man a Slave, whom his fellow-creatures may buy and sell and torture?”

“When these questions are fairly and favourably answered, their laudatory epithets may be allowed: But, till that can be done, we would seriously advise them to keep clear of superlatives.”

American writers betrayed irritation over the question, “Who reads an American book?” long after 1820. Nearly thirty years later, Lowell, reviewing Longfellow’s *Kavanaugh*, said: “The Stamp Act and the Boston Port Bill scarcely produced a greater excitement than the appalling question, *Who reads an American book?*” In *Leaves from My Journal* Lowell refers again to Sydney Smith’s question:

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"It had been resolved unanimously that we must and would have a national literature. England, France, Spain, Italy, each already had one, Germany was getting one as fast as possible, and Ireland vowed that she once had one far surpassing them all. To be respectable, we must have one also, and that speedily. . . . Sydney Smith's scornful question, 'Who reads an American book?' tingled in our ears. Surely never was a young nation setting forth jauntily to seek its fortune so dumfounded as Brother Jonathan when John Bull cried gruffly from the roadside, 'Stand, and deliver a national literature!' After fumbling in his pockets, he was obliged to confess that he hadn't one about him at the moment, but vowed he had left a first-rate one home which he would have fetched along—only it was so everlasting heavy."

In 1850 we find Herman Melville predicting the day when men will ask the question, "Who reads a book by an Englishman that is a modern?" The most remarkable reaction to Sydney Smith's question came from John Neal, who tells the story in his *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life*:

"... I happened to be dining with my friend, the late Henry Robinson, of Baltimore, an Englishman by birth and early education—one of the worthiest and most honorable and generous men I ever knew. The conversation turned, I know not how, upon American literature, and he, being full of admiration for the 'Edinburgh' and 'Quarterly,' asked, in the language of the day, 'Who reads an American book?' I know not what I said in reply; but I know how I felt, and that, finally, I told him, 'more in sorrow than in anger,' that I would leave my office, my library, and my law-business, and take passage in the first vessel I could find—we had no regular passage then—and see what might be done, with a fair field, and no favor, by an American writer [in England]. . . ."

Neal actually went to England, spent three years there, and got some articles printed in the British reviews (including five articles on "American Writers"); but he found that the British editors mutilated his articles, which in their published form hurt him in America.

One must not imagine that all American literature was written to convince the countrymen of Sydney Smith that the United States had, or was soon to have, a great national literature; and yet, especially before 1840, some such motive had much to do with a large amount of American writing. An uncritical literary patriotism, however, is not the best incentive to the production of great literature. It was not long before American reviewers were praising books of no importance merely because they were written by Americans and dealt with American life. In the period following 1830 we shall notice a reaction against literary nationalism, particularly in Longfellow and Poe; and yet the demand for a national literature continues to be voiced by such important figures as Emerson and Whitman.

The problem of creating an American literature was a difficult one. The economic handicaps have been mentioned. Another obstacle, seldom mentioned by American writers who discuss the problem, is the technical difficulty of finding suitable artistic means for painting the American landscape, portraying distinctively American characters, or presenting American ideals. The American environment furnished the writer excellent raw materials, but it gave him no technique for handling them. Of necessity he had to learn from English writers how to treat this new material. Bryant learned from Cowper, Southey,

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and Wordsworth how to picture the American forest and prairie; Cooper and Simms learned from Scott's Highlanders and outlaws how to paint the American Indian and frontiersman. Even in our own century Owen Wister has confessed that he wrote his first story of the West under the influence of Kipling and Stevenson and that the technical method he used was borrowed from a French short story by Prosper Mérimée.¹

The scholarly study of our literary history begins long after the period we are discussing. Our first important literary historian, Moses Coit Tyler, was born in 1835; and his *History of American Literature during the Colonial Period* did not appear until 1878. It was not until 1897 that Tyler completed his *Literary History of the American Revolution*.

VIII

The years 1789-1830 correspond roughly to the great period in English literature which marks the triumph of the Romantic Movement. Between 1798, the year of *Lyrical Ballads*, and 1832, the year in which Scott and Goethe died, appeared practically all of the important work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Hazlitt, and others. Their influence on American writers is important throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and even beyond. This is of course not the place for a discussion of their work, but it should be emphasized that American writers were often indebted to their British contemporaries and predecessors. American literature was then, if not now, still in some respects a part of English literature; and it cannot be thoroughly understood without studying it in its relation to the literature of the older country—and often to the literatures of other European countries.

There have been various attempts to define the word *Romanticism*, none of them wholly successful, for the movement took various forms in the many writers of the different countries of Europe. The French have often defined Romanticism as *lyrisme* because the subjective, or lyric, note is a common one. There is something of this quality to be seen in some of the English Romanticists, notably Byron, who in the words of Matthew Arnold, bore through Europe "the pageant of his bleeding heart." In Germany the most striking aspect of the Romantic Movement is the revival of the Middle Ages, which in England is best seen in the Waverley Novels. But there is little of the subjective in Scott, and Wordsworth had little interest in the Middle Ages. All of the English Romantic poets, however, celebrated the beauties of external nature. Perhaps no specific and all-inclusive definition of Romanticism can ever be framed. There are, however, some suggestive attempts at definition which are worth noting. In *The Age of Wordsworth* C. H. Herford maintains that in England Romanticism was primarily "an extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility." Other suggestive phrases are "the return to Nature," "the renaissance of wonder," and "the revival of romance." In their *History of English Litera-*

¹ For further discussion of the subject, see Harry Hayden Clark, "Nationalism in American Literature," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, II, 491-519 (July, 1933); Clarence Gohdes, "The Theme-Song of American Criticism," in the same magazine, VI, 49-65 (October, 1936); G. H. Orians, "The Romance Ferment after Waverley," *American Literature*, III, 408-431 (January, 1932); Benjamin Spencer's two articles: "A National Literature, 1837-1855," *American Literature*, VIII, 125-159 (May, 1936), and "A National Literature: Post-Civil War Decade," *Modern Language Quarterly*, IV, 71-86 (March, 1943).

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ture William Vaughn Moody and Robert Morss Lovett sum up Romanticism thus: "It is essentially the emphasis upon the individual effort to escape from the world of conventions and social control. There are two great avenues of such escape—external nature and the imagination." On one side Romanticism represents a revolt against Neo-classicism, especially as exemplified by Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. It has of course a close relation with the forces that led to the American Revolution and the French Revolution. A usable summary is given in the late Ashley H. Thorndike's *Literature in a Changing Age*. Under six heads—not all parallel—he indicates the chief interests of the English Romantic writers: 1. External Nature, 2. Humble Life, 3. The Revival of the Past, 4. The Temper of Revolt, 5. Supernaturalism, and 6. Subjectivity. In American literature three of these characteristics are less important than in English literature: The Revival of the Past, The Temper of Revolt, and Supernaturalism. The American past was brief and none too picturesque, and what was there to revolt from in the land of liberty? The first two characteristics in Thorndike's list, however, bulk large. The beauties of American scenery are celebrated in the poems of Bryant, the novels of Cooper, and the essays and stories of Irving. Humble life is idealized in Longfellow's "The Village Blacksmith" and *Evangeline*, and in the novels of Cooper and Simms. Romanticism prompted an increased interest in the American past; but Hawthorne and Cooper, who both dealt with it successfully, came to the conclusion that American history furnished almost nothing comparable to the rich materials which Scott had found in the past of England and Scotland. In a later period we shall find Romanticism taking in New England the unusual form of Transcendentalism.

IX

During the Revolutionary period the Southern colonies, notably Virginia, had been the scene of some remarkable political writing. There was more of what might be classed as *belles-lettres* than is generally supposed, but the culture of the South did not usually express itself in literature. In this respect the South runs true to the type of culture which it represented: country gentlemen have rarely been conspicuous for either the production or the patronage of literature. In *The Travelling Bachelor* Cooper comments on the gentlemen of the South:

"I am of opinion, that in proportion to the population, there are more men who belong to what is termed the class of gentlemen, in the old southern States of America than in any other country in the world. So far as pride in themselves, a courteous air, and a general intelligence, are concerned, they are, perhaps quite on a level with the gentry of any other country, though their intelligence must necessarily be chiefly of that sort which is obtained by the use of books, rather than of extensive familiarity with the world. In respect to conventional manners, they are not so generally finished as the upper classes of other countries, or even of some classes in their own; though I do not know where to find gentlemen of better air or better breeding throughout, than most of those I have met in the southern *Atlantic States*."

New England, which is to play the leading role in the next period (1830-1870), was in the first quarter of the nineteenth century intellectually not altogether awake—except for the Connecticut Wits. In 1852 Emerson wrote in his journal: ". . . from 1790 to 1820,

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there was not a book, a speech, a conversation, or a thought in the State [Massachusetts]. About 1820, the Channing, Webster, and Everett era begun, and we have been bookish and poetical and cogitative since." Henry Adams wrote in his *History of the United States*: "Between New England and the Middle States was a gap like that between Scotland and England. The conceptions of life were different. In New England society was organized on a system,—a [Congregational] clergy in alliance with a magistracy; universities supporting each, and supported in turn,—a social hierarchy, in which respectability, education, property, and religion united to crush the unwise and vicious."

The democratic ideal of the Revolution had not yet appealed to New England as strongly as to other sections. In his *New England in the Republic* James Truslow Adams writes:

"The Congregational clergy, occupying a privileged position and vested interests, were the natural allies of the rich and conservative elements in New England. The backbone of the Federalist party was made up of the merchant-lawyer-capitalist group, the clergy, and the local magnates, who in the small villages and towns, had been accustomed to position and a political influence similar to those of the country gentry in England. John Adams always saw clearly the many social and economic conflicts of interest in New England society, which for long escaped the more modern historians of that section. 'The state of Connecticut,' he wrote in 1808, 'has always been governed by an aristocracy, more decisively than the empire of Great Britain is. Half a dozen, or, at most, a dozen families, have controlled that country when a colony, as well as since it has been a state. An aristocracy can govern the elections of the people without hereditary legal dignities, privileges, and powers, better than with them. . . .'"

Fisher Ames, a witty New England Federalist, thought that genuine democracy would lead to revolution. "Our country," he said, "is too big for union, too sordid for patriotism, too democratical for liberty. What is to become of it, He who made it best knows."

Even in Massachusetts there was nothing like the widespread interest in literature and culture which is so notable a characteristic of the following period. Josiah Quincy, President of Harvard College, wrote of the state of literature in the Andover, Massachusetts, Academy about 1815, when he was a student there:

"English literature was presented in the sober guise of 'Vincent's Explanations of the Westminster Catechism,' and 'Mason on Self-Knowledge,' and from each of these books we were required to recite once a week. The sole work of imagination tolerated by the authorities was the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' There was, nevertheless, an awful rumor, only to be mentioned under one's breath, that Dr. Porter, professor of rhetoric in the divinity schools, had upon his shelves the writings of a person called William Shakespeare, a play-actor, whose literary productions were far from edifying."

To New England belongs that indefatigable compiler of dictionaries and spelling-books, Noah Webster (1758-1843), a neighbor of the Hartford Wits. Federalist though he was, Webster wrote in 1790: "A fundamental mistake of the Americans has been, that they considered the revolution as completed, when it was but just begun. . . . This country is independent in government; but totally dependent in manners, which are the basis of government." Believing that no purer English was spoken anywhere than in his native New England, he had written the preceding year in his *Dissertations on the English Lan-*

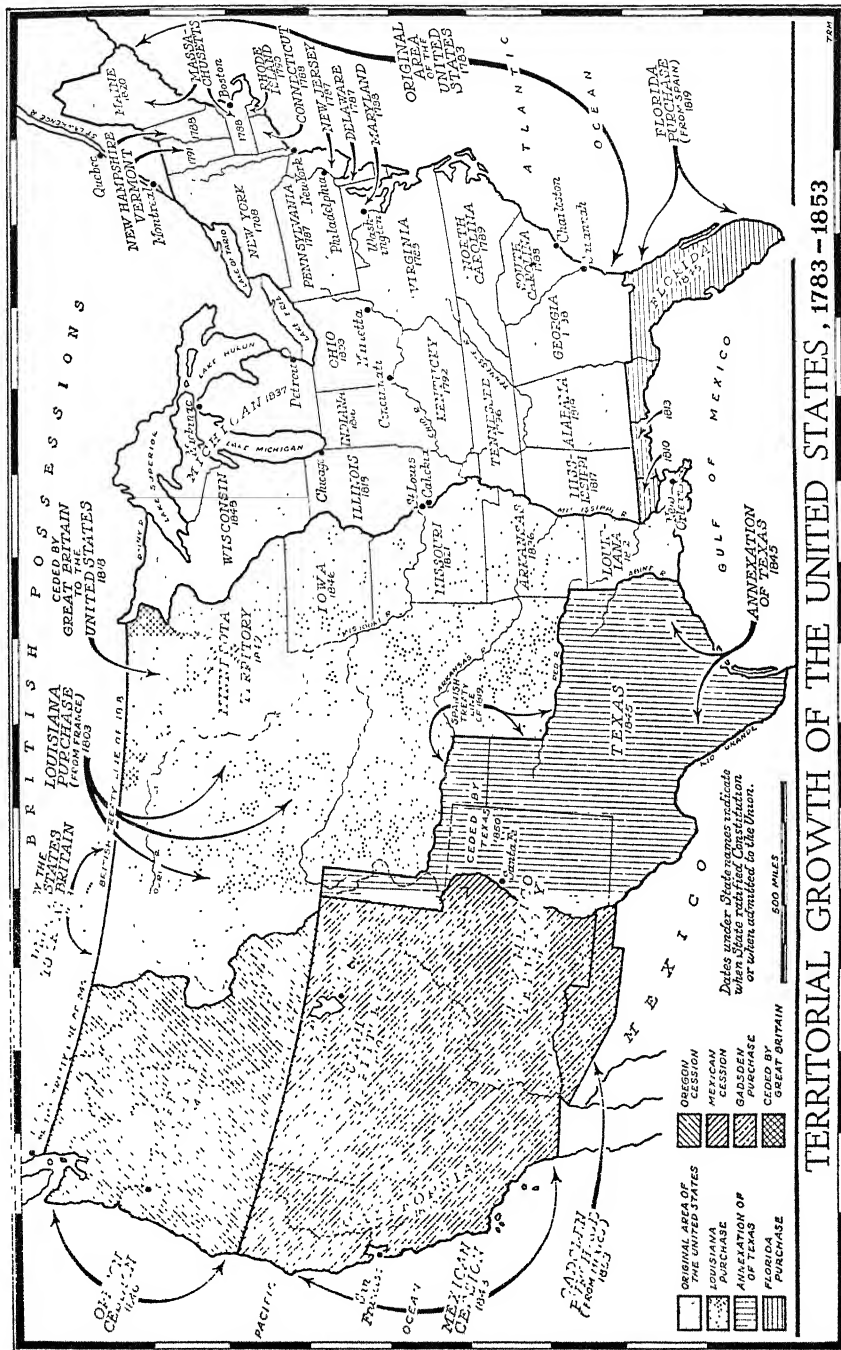
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guage: "As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as in government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be *our* standard; for the taste of her writers is already corrupted, and her language on the decline. But if it were not so, she is at too great a distance to be our model, and to instruct us in the principles of our tongue." Since Webster's day American writers have employed the English language with less deference to British usage—to the displeasure of many English visitors—and with more of an eye to its American resources.

In this period Philadelphia was—until New York superseded it—our chief literary center. The French traveler, Brissot de Warville, wrote of the city as he saw it in 1788: "Philadelphia may be considered as the metropolis of the United States. It is certainly the finest town, and the best built; it is the most wealthy, though not the most luxurious. You find here more men of information, more political and literary knowledge, and more learned societies." By 1820 New York had become the most important literary center. Irving, however, was the only important writer who was a native of that city.

The literary contribution of the West in this period (1789-1830) was not large, nor was it to prove large until after the Civil War. Until that time the writings of Westerners have much the same sort of interest as those of the Colonial writers; their interest for us is historical, social, and cultural, for few of them have any intrinsic literary importance. (See Ralph L. Rusk, *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, 1925.) One finds some reflection of the great West in the writings of Easterners—notably in Bryant's "The Prairies," Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies*, and Cooper's *The Prairie*.

The first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy*, appeared in 1789, the year in which Washington was inaugurated as President. This novel, long ascribed to a Boston poetess, Sarah Wentworth Morton, is now believed to have been written by William Hill Brown. (See Milton Ellis, "The Author of the First American Novel," *American Literature*, IV, 359-368, January, 1933). A more popular novel was Mrs. Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte* (1790), later entitled *Charlotte Temple*; this was one of numerous tales of seduction reminiscent of Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*. Much more important are the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, who owes much to William Godwin and the English Gothic novelists. After the publication of *Waverley* in 1814, the chief debt of American novelists is to Scott. The demand for a native literature frequently took the form of a demand for American historical romances. (See G. Harrison Orians, "The Romance Ferment after *Waverley*," *American Literature*, III, 408-431, January, 1932.) Deeply indebted though American writers of fiction were to British models, Cooper and Irving showed their originality by creating distinctively American characters and by vividly portraying scenes which had no counterpart in the Old World. It was in this period that America for the first time—if we except Franklin—produced men of letters whose work was important enough to command the attention of cultivated Europeans. There was certainly no need for any American to feel ashamed of Irving, Cooper, and Bryant, who wrote books that still have some interest for readers of the twentieth century.



WASHINGTON IRVING

1783 - 1859

I . . . found the author, whom I had loved, repeated in the man. The same playful humor; the same touches of sentiment; the same poetic atmosphere; and . . . the entire absence of all literary jealousy.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

New York City, in which Irving was born on April 3, 1783, was far from being the metropolis of today. A large proportion of its population of less than twenty thousand were descendants of the Dutch settlers. In Irving's lifetime, which extended from the close of the Revolution almost to the Civil War, the city was to grow into the metropolis which Whitman celebrated in *Leaves of Grass*. Irving's father was a Scotch merchant who had married an Englishwoman. Everyone knows the story that George Washington gave his little namesake his blessing when Lizzie, the Scotch nurse, followed the conqueror of Cornwallis into a shop and said, "Please your Honor, here's a bairn was named after you." Irving resembled his mother, and had nothing of the austerity of his Presbyterian father, who is said to have "led his children to believe all pleasures were wicked." The boy's health was delicate, and he had no great amount of schooling (we are told that he wrote compositions for the boys who did his sums), but he was fond of reading books of travel and adventure. The opening paragraphs of "The Author's Account of Himself" prefixed to *The Sketch Book* give us a glimpse of his boyhood:

"I was always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city, to the frequent alarm of my parents, and the emolument of the town crier. As I grew into boyhood, I extended the range of my observations. My holiday afternoons were spent in rambles about the surrounding country. I made myself familiar with all its places famous in history or fable. I knew every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen. I visited the neighboring villages, and added greatly to my stock of knowledge, by noting their habits and customs and conversing with their sages and great men. . . .

"This rambling propensity strengthened with my years. Books of voyages and travels became my passion, and in devouring their contents, I neglected the regular exercises of the school. How wistfully would I wander about the pier-heads in fine weather, and watch the parting ships, bound to distant climes; with what

longing eyes would I gaze after their lessening sails, and waft myself in imagination to the ends of the earth!"

In 1804 Irving, threatened with consumption, started on a two-year visit to Europe. In leisurely fashion he wandered over France, Italy, and England. Everywhere he found Europeans amazingly ignorant of the United States. His association with Washington Allston, whom he met in Rome, tempted him for a time to become a painter. He returned to America in better health and with a greatly widened perspective on the world of literature and art, and also with a keener sense of American provincialism.

Soon after his return to New York in 1806 he was admitted to the bar, although he practiced as little as those other literary lawyers, Lowell, Boker, and Lanier. The following conversation is said to have taken place between the two lawyers, Josiah Ogden Hoffman and Martin Wilkins, who had just examined him and were about to grant him a license to practice:

"Martin, I think he knows a *little* law."

"Make it stronger, Jo; *d*—*d* little."

Hoffman's daughter Matilda, whom Irving loved, died in 1809 in her eighteenth year. Her death made a deep and lasting impression upon Irving. In later life he is said to have proposed marriage to an English girl, Emily Foster; and Irving, had he been willing, might perhaps have married Mary Godwin Shelley, the widow of the poet; but he never married.

Irving's first important literary venture—in collaboration with his older brother William and James Kirke Paulding—was *Salmagundi*, one of the many American imitations of the *Spectator*. Twenty numbers appeared in 1807. The aims of the authors were less didactic than those of Steele and Addison had been. "If we moralize, it shall be seldom," announced the editors; "and, on all occasions, we shall be more solicitous to make our readers laugh than cry; for we are laughing philosophers, and truly of the opinion that wisdom, true wisdom, is a plump, jolly dame, who sits in her arm-chair, laughs right merrily at the farce of life—and takes the world as it goes."

In 1809 appeared Diedrich Knickerbocker's *A History of New York*, one of the three or four of Irving's best books. Although some of the older Dutch families were scandalized by this burlesque history, the book was a great success. Irving's returns on the first edition were about three thousand dollars—and this at a time when few publishers were willing to risk printing the work of any American author. Irving's friend, Henry Brevoort, sent a copy of *Knickerbocker* to Walter Scott, who wrote:

"MY DEAR SIR:

I beg you to accept my best thanks for the uncommon degree of entertainment which I have received from the most excellently jocose history of New York. I am sensible, that as a stranger to American parties and politics, I must lose much of the concealed satire of the piece, but I must own that looking at the simple and obvious meaning only, I have never read any thing so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift, as the annals of Diedrich Knickerbocker. I have been employed these few evenings in reading them aloud to Mrs. S. and two ladies who are our guests, and our sides have been absolutely sore with laughing. I think, too, there are passages, which indicate that the author possesses powers of a different kind, and has some touches which remind me of Sterne. I beg you will have the kindness to let me know when Mr. Irvine [*sic*] takes pen in hand again, for assuredly I shall

expect a very great treat which I may chance never to hear of but through your kindness.

Believe me, Dear Sir,
Your obliged humble servant,
WALTER SCOTT."

ABBOTSFORD, 23d April, 1813.

Irving's unprecedented literary success did not move him to any great exertion. For something over a year (1813-1814) he was the anonymous editor of the *Analectic Magazine*, but he did not like to be tied down to regular writing and he disliked writing unfavorable reviews of books that he could not conscientiously praise.

In 1815 Irving returned to Europe, not suspecting that it would be seventeen years before he saw America again. He was now a member of his brothers' firm, and until its bankruptcy in 1818 he suffered many financial worries. After the failure of the firm, Irving turned seriously to literature as a means of earning his livelihood. The first result was *The Sketch Book* (1819-1820). After declining a place on the American Navy Board, which had been offered him through the influence of Stephen Decatur, Irving wrote to his brother Ebenezer on March 3, 1819:

"I have sent by Capt. Merry of the *Rosalie*, the first number of a work [*The Sketch Book*] which I hope to be able to continue from time to time. . . . It [the place on the Navy Board] would have led to no higher situations, for I am quite unfitted for political life. My talents are merely literary, and all my habits of thinking, reading, &c., have been in a different direction from that required for the active politician. I require much leisure and a mind entirely abstracted from other cares and occupations, if I would write much or write well. . . . If I ever get any solid credit with the public, it must be in the quiet and assiduous operations of my pen, under the mere guidance of fancy or feeling. . . .

". . . Do not, I beseech you, impute my lingering in Europe to any indifference to my own country or my friends. My greatest desire is to make myself worthy of the good-will of my country, and my greatest anticipation of happiness is the return to my friends."

On the same day Irving wrote to Henry Brevoort:

"I have attempted [in *The Sketch Book*] no lofty theme nor sought to look wise and learned, which appears to be very much the fashion among our American writers at present. I have preferred addressing myself to the feeling & fancy of the reader, more than to his judgment. My writings may therefore appear light & trifling in our country of philosophers & politicians—but if they possess merit in the class of literature to which they belong it is all to which I aspire in the work. I seek only to blow a flute of accompaniment in the national concert, and leave others to play the fiddle & French Horn."

When *The Sketch Book* began to appear in installments of four or five sketches, it made something of a sensation in America. Longfellow wrote after Irving's death:

"Every reader has his first book: I mean to say, one book among all others which in early youth first fascinates his imagination, and at once excites and satisfies the desires of his mind. To me, this first book was the *Sketch-Book of Washington*

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Irving. I was a school-boy when it was published, and read each succeeding number with ever increasing wonder and delight, spell-bound by its pleasant humor, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of revery,—nay, even by its gray-brown covers, the shaded letters of its titles, and the fair clear type, which seemed an outward symbol of its style.”

When *The Sketch Book* was republished in England, it had a great success in spite of the failure of its first English publisher. John Murray, most famous of British publishers, took it over and republished the *Knickerbocker's History of New York*. He paid Irving £1,000 for his next book, *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) and 1,500 guineas for *Tales of a Traveller* (1824). On October 21, 1828, Irving wrote to Alexander Everett:

“Murray has offered me a thousand pounds a year to conduct a periodical magazine he is about setting up, to be devoted entirely to literature and the arts, without the least mixture of politics or personality, and to pay me liberally besides for any articles I may contribute to it. I have declined, as I do not wish to engage in any undertaking that would oblige me to fix my residence out of America; and, indeed, I am unwilling to shackle myself with any periodical labor. He also offers me a hundred guineas an article for contributions to the Quarterly. This is extremely liberal, but, unfortunately, his review has been so hostile to our country, that I cannot think of writing a line for it. Had it been otherwise, I could hardly have resisted such a temptation.”

Irving was now one of the most successful authors in either country. His work had been highly praised in British reviews at the time when Sydney Smith was asking, “Who reads an American book?” Conspicuous among his literary friends were Scott, who thought *The Sketch Book* “positively beautiful”; Thomas Moore, who described Irving as “Not strong as a lion, but delightful as a domestic animal”; Samuel Rogers, the poet, whose breakfasts were attended by many American writers; and the American playwright, John Howard Payne, with whom Irving collaborated. After Irving's death another friend, Thackeray, wrote of him in “Nil Nisi Bonum”:

“[Irving] was the first Ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. . . . His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans.”

Although no one expected British authors who chose to live on the continent to explain why they did not return home, Americans were sensitive and wondered if Irving had not lost all patriotic feeling. He found it necessary to explain to his friend Brevoort why he did not at once return to the United States:

“You urge me to return to New York—and say many ask whether I mean to renounce my country? For this last question I have no reply to make—and yet I will make a reply—as far as my precarious and imperfect abilities enable me, I am endeavouring to serve my country. Whatever I have written has been written with the feelings and published as the writing of an American. Is that renouncing my country? How else am I to serve my country—by coming home and begging an office of it: which I should not have the kind of talent or the business habits requisite to fill?—If I can do any good in this world it is with my pen.—I feel that

even with that I can do very little, but if I do that little, and do it as an American I think my exertions ought to guarantee me from so unkind a question as that which you say is generally made."

Before his return to America in 1832, Irving visited Spain. The romantic past of that country appealed to him as strongly as that of England. As a result of a stay in the palace of the Moorish kings in Granada, he wrote *The Alhambra* (1832), to which Prescott the historian referred as a "beautiful Spanish Sketch-Book." He left Spain to become Secretary of the American Legation in London, a position which came to him through the influence of Martin Van Buren. He returned to America in 1832 bearing with him an honorary LL.D. degree from Oxford and the medal of the Royal Society of Literature. His American reception was as cordial and as enthusiastic as one could have asked for.

Irving's best work had now been done. As he once remarked, "The best things of an author are spontaneous—the first pressing of the grape, the after squeezings are not so rich." His interests were now turning away from the short story and the essay to history and biography, chiefly on American subjects. Although he was not the scholarly investigator that Francis Parkman was soon to become, Irving was no unworthy successor to the long line of literary historians which includes Herodotus, Livy, Gibbon, and Macaulay. Irving gathered materials for a history of Cortez's conquest of Mexico; but, hearing that a young Boston historian, William Hickling Prescott, was working on the same subject, with characteristic generosity he gave way to the younger man at a considerable sacrifice to himself.

Back in America, Irving felt more strongly the pressure of public opinion, which practically demanded that an American author concern himself with American themes. On October 28, 1833, he wrote to his brother Peter: "I am, as you know, dammed up by the necessity (or fancied necessity) of producing a work upon American subjects, before I can give vent to the other materials that have been accumulating upon me." It was largely to please the American public that he drew on his diaries for *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), which, while not equal to *The Sketch Book*, is a competent treatment of new and interesting material.

Irving's last years may be passed over briefly. After ten years in the States, he returned to Madrid in 1842 as Minister to Spain. He was the first of a long line of literary ambassadors, which includes James Russell Lowell, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bret Harte, William Dean Howells, and Thomas Nelson Page. Irving returned to America in 1846 and spent the remaining thirteen years of his life at Sunnyside, near the Sleepy Hollow that he had made famous. He died in 1859.

Irving's nephew, Pierre M. Irving, published in 1862-1864 a four-volume life, which contains many interesting letters. There are later biographies by Charles Dudley Warner (1881), H. W. Boynton (1901), and George S. Hellman (1925). Stanley T. Williams, who has edited a number of Irving's notebooks, is the author of an admirable biography (1935) as well as the chapter on Irving in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). See also George S. Hellman (ed.), *Letters of Washington Irving to Henry Brevoort* (1915) and *Letters of Henry Brevoort to Washington Irving* (1916). The standard of Irving's works is the Author's Revised Edition (1846-1861) in forty volumes. A useful volume of selections with an excellent bibliography is Henry A. Pochmann, *Washington Irving: Representative Selections* (1934) in the American Writers Series. There are many editions of *The Sketch Book*. For Irving's relations with his contemporaries, see Van Wyck Brooks, *The World of Washington Irving* (1944).

CRITICAL COMMENTS

His greatest merits, which nothing can abate, are pervasive artistic conscience, admirable and persistent sense of form, and constant devotion to his literary ideals (Barrett Wendell, *A Literary History of America*, 1900, p. 179).

The answer to those who dismiss Irving from American literature as a European man of letters is to point out that he was the first of our writers to furnish us with valuable American folk legends. In *Rip Van Winkle*, for example, he conferred upon the old German tale of the sleeping Friedrich Barbarossa a vividly realized American background, and so transmuted its substance into significant reality. It is now an integral part of our racial memory (Edward J. O'Brien, *The Advance of the American Short Story*, rev. ed., 1931, p. 33).

A gentleman in easy circumstances, he sedulously avoided all his years any thinking on fundamental subjects; a man either timid or cool, he let all the major experiences of life escape him. . . . This elegant writer was a strange enough product for a country and a polity supposedly new (Ludwig Lewisohn, *Expression in America*, 1932, p. 43).

Unlike his contemporary, Cooper, Irving saw the European past in an aura of romance, and, except for the gentle satire of his early works, consistently avoided coming to grips with modern democratic life. In most of his writing, graceful, humorous, and pleasant, he was a careful stylist in the tradition of Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith (James D. Hart, *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*, 1941, p. 359).

LETTER TO HENRY BREVOORT

PARIS, RUE RICHELIEU, No. 89

Dec. 11th 1824.

MY DEAR BREVOORT:—

- - - Lynch¹ seems quite in raptures with the wonders that are breaking upon him. He is just the man to visit a capital like Paris: having had his tastes previously instructed and prepared to relish the delicacies placed before him. I cannot tell you what pleasure I have received from long chats with Lynch about old times & old associates. His animated and descriptive manner has put all New York before me and made me long to be once more there. I do not know whether it be the force of early impressions & associations, or whether it be really well founded, but there is a charm about that little spot of earth, that beautiful city and its environs, that has a perfect spell over my imagination. The bay; the rivers & their wild & woody shores; the haunts of my boyhood, both on land and water, absolutely have a witchery over my mind. I thank God for my having been born in so beautiful a place among such beautiful scenery. I am con-

vinced I owe a vast deal of what is good and pleasant in my nature to the circumstance.

I feel continually indebted to your kindness for the interest you have taken in my affairs and in the success of my works in America. I begin to feel extremely anxious to secure a little income from my literary property; that shall put me beyond the danger of recurring penury; and shall render me independent of the necessity of laboring for the press. I should like to write occasionally for my amusement, and to have the power of throwing my writings either into my portfolio, or into the fire. I enjoy the first conception and first sketchings drawn of my ideas; but the correcting and preparing them for the press is unknown labour, and publishing is detestable.

My last work² has a good run in England, and has been extremely well spoken of by some of the worthies of literature, though it has met with some handling from the press. The fact is I have kept myself so aloof from all clan ship in literature, that I have no allies among the scribblers for the periodical press; and some of them have taken a pique against me for having treated them a little cavalierly in my writings. However, as I

¹ Dominick Lynch, a New York friend.

² *Tales of a Traveller*.

do not read criticisms good or bad, I am out of the reach of attack. If my writings are worth any thing they will out live temporary criticism; if not they are not worth caring about. Some parts of my last work were written rather hastily. Yet I am convinced that a great part of it was written in a freer and happier vein than almost any of my former writings. There was more of an artist like touch about it—though this is not a thing to be appreciated by the many. I fancy much of what I value myself upon in writing, escapes the observation of the great mass of my readers: who are intent more upon the story than the way in which it is told. For my part I consider a story merely as a frame on which to stretch my materials. It is the play of thought, and sentiment and language; the weaving in of characters, lightly yet expressively delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half concealed vein of humour that is often playing through the whole—these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed. I have preferred adopting a mode of sketches & short tales rather than long works, because I chose to take a line of writing peculiar to myself; rather than fall into the manner or school of any other writer: and there is a constant activity of thought and a nicety of execution required in writings of the kind, more than the world appears to imagine. It is comparatively easy to swell a story to any size when you have once the scheme & the characters in your mind; the mere interest of the story too carries the reader on through pages & pages of careless writing and the author may often be dull for half a volume at a time, if he has some striking scene at the end of it, but in these shorter writings every page must have its merit. The author must be continually piquant—woe to him if he makes an awkward sentence or writes a stupid page: the critics are sure to pounce upon it. Yet if he succeed: the very variety & piquancy of his writings; nay their very brevity; makes them frequently recurred to—and when the mere interest of the story is exhausted, he begins to get credit for his touches of pathos or humour; his points of wit or turns of language. I give these as some of the reasons that have induced me to keep on thus far in the way I had opened for myself—because I find by recent letters from E. I. that you are joining in the oft repeated advice that I should write a novel. I believe the works I have

written will be oftener re-read than any novel of the size that I could have written. It is true other writers have crowded into the same branch of literature, and I now begin to find myself elbowed by men who have followed my footsteps; but at any rate I have had the merit of adopting a line for myself instead of following others.

from KNICKERBOCKER'S HISTORY OF NEW YORK (1809)*

The *History of New York* is, after Franklin's *Autobiography*, our earliest indisputable classic. Irving's purpose in writing the *History* is made clear by "The Author's Apology," written thirty-nine years after the book appeared. The text of the other selections given here is from the edition of Stanley T. Williams and Tremaine McDowell (1927) in the American Authors Series, based upon the first edition, which is somewhat more racy than the revised edition.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY (1848)

The following work, in which, at the outset, nothing more was contemplated than a temporary jeu d'esprit, was commenced in company with my brother, the late Peter Irving, Esq. Our idea was to parody a small hand-book which had recently appeared, entitled "A Picture of New-York." Like that, our work was to begin with an historical sketch; to be followed by notices of the customs, manners, and institutions of the city; written in a serio-comic vein, and treating local errors, follies, and abuses with good-humored satire.

To burlesque the pedantic lore displayed in certain American works, our historical sketch was to commence with the creation of the world; and we laid all kinds of works under contribution for trite citations, relevant or irrelevant, to give it the proper air of learned research. Before this crude mass of mock erudition could be digested into form, my brother departed for Europe, and I was left to prosecute the enterprise alone.

I now altered the plan of the work. Discarding all idea of a parody on the *Picture of New-York*, I determined that what had been originally intended as an introductory sketch, should comprise the whole work, and form a comic history of the city. I accordingly moulded the mass of citations and disquisitions into introductory

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chapters forming the first book; but it soon became evident to me that, like Robinson Crusoe with his boat, I had begun on too large a scale, and that, to launch my history successfully, I must reduce its proportions. I accordingly resolved to confine it to the period of the Dutch domination, which, in its rise, progress, and decline, presented that unity of subject required by classic rule. It was a period, also, at that time almost a terra incognita in history. In fact, I was surprised to find how few of my fellow-citizens were aware that New York had ever been called New Amsterdam, or had heard of the names of its early Dutch governors, or cared a straw about their ancient Dutch progenitors.

This, then, broke upon me as the poetic age of our city; poetic from its very obscurity; and open, like the early and obscure days of ancient Rome, to all the embellishments of heroic fiction. I hailed my native city as fortunate above all other American cities, in having an antiquity thus extending back into the regions of doubt and fable; neither did I conceive I was committing any grievous historical sin in helping out the few facts I could collect in this remote and forgotten region with figments of my own brain, or in giving characteristic attributes to the few names connected with it which I might dig up from oblivion.

In this, doubtless, I reasoned like a young and inexperienced writer, besotted with his own fancies; and my presumptuous trespasses into this sacred, though neglected, region of history have met with deserved rebuke from men of soberer minds. It is too late, however, to recall the shaft thus rashly launched. To any one whose sense of fitness it may wound, I can only say with Hamlet,

*Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.*

I will say this in further apology for my work: that if it has taken an unwarrantable liberty with our early provincial history, it has at least turned attention to that history and provoked research. It is only since this work appeared that the forgotten archives of the province have been rummaged, and the facts and personages of the olden time rescued from the dust of oblivion and elevated into whatever importance they may actually possess.

The main object of my work, in fact, had a bearing wide from the sober aim of history; but one which, I trust, will meet with some indulgence from poetic minds. It was to embody the traditions of our city in an amusing form; to illustrate its local humors, customs, and peculiarities; to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home.

In this I have reason to believe I have in some measure succeeded. Before the appearance of my work the popular traditions of our city were unrecorded; the peculiar and racy customs and usages derived from our Dutch progenitors were unnoticed, or regarded with indifference, or adverted to with a sneer. Now they form a convivial currency, and are brought forward on all occasions; they link our whole community together in good humor and good fellowship; they are the rallying points of home feeling; the seasoning of our civic festivities; the staple of local tales and local pleasantries; and are so harped upon by our writers of popular fiction, that I find myself almost crowded off the legendary ground which I was the first to explore, by the host who have followed in my footsteps.

I dwell on this head because, at the first appearance of my work, its aim and drift were misapprehended by some of the descendants of the Dutch worthies; and because I understand that now and then one may still be found to regard it with a captious eye. The far greater part, however, I have reason to flatter myself, receive my good-humored picturings in the same temper in which they were executed; and when I find, after a lapse of nearly forty years, this haphazard production of my youth still cherished among them; when I find its very name become a "household word," and used to give the home stamp to everything recommended for popular acceptance, such as Knickerbocker societies; Knickerbocker insurance companies; Knickerbocker steamboats; Knickerbocker omnibuses; Knickerbocker bread, and Knickerbocker ice: and when I find New-Yorkers of Dutch descent priding themselves upon being "genuine Knickerbockers," I please myself with the persuasion that I have struck the right chord; that my dealings with the good old Dutch times, and the customs and usages derived from them, are in

harmony with the feelings and humors of my townsmen; that I have opened a vein of pleasant associations and quaint characteristics peculiar to my native place, and which its inhabitants will not willingly suffer to pass away; and that, though other histories of New-York may appear of higher claims to learned acceptance, and may take their dignified and appropriate rank in the family library, Knickerbocker's history will still be received with good-humored indulgence, and be thumbed and chuckled over by the family fireside.

W. I.

SUNNYSIDE 1848

BOOK III

IN WHICH IS RECORDED THE GOLDEN REIGN OF
WOUTER VAN TWILLER

CHAPTER I

Setting forth the unparalleled virtues of the renowned Wouter Van Twiller as likewise his unutterable wisdom in the law case of Wandle Schoonhoven and Barent Bleecker—and of the great admiration of the public thereat.

The renowned WOUTER (or Walter) VAN TWILLER, was descended from a long line of dutch burgomasters, who had successively dozed away their lives and grown fat upon the bench of magistracy in Rotterdam; and who had comforted themselves with such singular wisdom and propriety, that they were never either heard or talked of—which, next to being universally applauded, should be the object of ambition of all sage magistrates and rulers.

His surname of Twiller, is said to be a corruption of the original *Twijfler*, which in English means *doubter*; a name admirably descriptive of his deliberative habits. For though he was a man, shut up within himself like an oyster, and of such a profoundly reflective turn, that he scarcely ever spoke except in monosyllables, yet did he never make up his mind, on any doubtful point. This was clearly accounted for by his adherents, who affirmed that he always conceived every object on so comprehensive a scale, that he had not room in his head, to turn it over and examine both sides of it, so that he always remained in doubt, merely in consequence of the astonishing magnitude of his ideas!

There are two opposite ways by which some men get into notice—one by talking a vast deal

and thinking a little, and the other by holding their tongues and not thinking at all. By the first many a vapouring, superficial pretender acquires the reputation of a man of quick parts—by the other many a vacant dunderpate, like the owl, the stupidest of birds, comes to be complimented, by a discerning world, with all the attributes of wisdom. This, by the way, is a mere casual remark, which I would not for the universe have it thought, I apply to Governor Van Twiller. On the contrary he was a very wise dutchman, for he never said a foolish thing—and of such invincible gravity, that he was never known to laugh, or even to smile, through the course of a long and prosperous life. Certain however it is, there never was a matter proposed, however simple, and on which your common narrow minded mortals, would rashly determine at the first glance, but what the renowned Wouter, put on a mighty mysterious, vacant kind of look, shook his capacious head, and having smoked for five minutes with redoubled earnestness, sagely observed, that “he had his doubts about the matter”—which in process of time gained him the character of a man slow of belief, and not easily imposed on.

The person of this illustrious old gentleman was as regularly formed and nobly proportioned, as though it had been moulded by the hands of some cunning dutch statuary, as a model of majesty and lordly grandeur. He was exactly five feet six inches in height, and six feet five inches in circumference. His head was a perfect sphere, far excelling in magnitude that of the great Pericles (who was thence waggishly called *Schenocephalus*, or onion head)—indeed, of such stupendous dimensions was it, that dame nature herself, with all her sex's ingenuity, would have been puzzled to construct a neck, capable of supporting it; wherefore she wisely declined the attempt, and settled it firmly on the top of his back bone, just between the shoulders; where it remained, as snugly bedded, as a ship of war in the mud of the Potowmac. His body was of an oblong form, particularly capacious at bottom; which was wisely ordered by providence, seeing that he was a man of sedentary habits, and very averse to the idle labour of walking. His legs, though exceeding short, were sturdy in proportion to the weight they had to sustain; so that when erect, he had not a little the appearance of a robustious beer barrel, standing on skids. His face, that infallible index of the mind, presented

a vast expanse perfectly unfurrowed or deformed by any of those lines and angles, which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. Two small grey eyes twinkled feebly in the midst, like two stars of lesser magnitude, in a hazy firmament; and his full fed cheeks, which seemed to have taken toll of every thing that went into his mouth, were curiously mottled and streaked with dusky red, like a spitzenberg apple.

His habits were as regular as his person. He daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the four and twenty. Such was the renowned Wouter Van Twiller—a true philosopher, for his mind was either elevated above, or tranquilly settled below, the cares and perplexities of this world. He had lived in it for years, without feeling the least curiosity to know whether the sun revolved around it, or it round the sun; and he had even watched for at least half a century, the smoke curling from his pipe to the ceiling, without once troubling his head with any of those numerous theories, by which a philosopher would have perplexed his brain, in accounting for its rising above the surrounding atmosphere.

In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge chair of solid oak hewn in the celebrated forest of the Hague, fabricated by an experienced Timmerman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet, into exact imitations of gigantic eagle's claws. Instead of a sceptre he swayed a long turkish pipe, wrought with jasmin and amber, which had been presented to a stadtholder of Holland, at the conclusion of a treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers.—In this stately chair would he sit, and this magnificent pipe would he smoke, shaking his right knee with a constant motion, and fixing his eye for hours together upon a little print of Amsterdam, which hung in a black frame, against the opposite wall of the council chamber. Nay, it has ever been said, that when any deliberation of extraordinary length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would absolutely shut his eyes for full two hours at a time, that he might not be disturbed by external objects—and at such times the internal commotion of his mind, was evinced by certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict, made by his contending doubts and opinions.

It is with infinite difficulty I have been enabled to collect these biographical anecdotes of the great man under consideration. The facts respecting him were so scattered and vague, and 5 divers of them so questionable in point of authenticity, that I have had to give up the search after many, and decline the admission of still more, which would have tended to heighten the colouring of his portrait.

I have been the more anxious to delineate fully, the person and habits of the renowned Van Twiller, from the consideration that he was not only the first, but also the best governor that ever presided over this ancient and respectable province; and so tranquil and benevolent was his reign, that I do not find throughout the whole of it, a single instance of any offender being brought to punishment:—a most indubitable sign of a merciful governor, and a case unparalleled, excepting in the reign of the illustrious King Log, from whom, it is hinted, the renowned Van Twiller was a lineal descendant.

The very outset of the career of this excellent magistrate, like that of Solomon, or to speak more appropriately, like that of the illustrious governor of Baratania, was distinguished by an example of legal acumen, that gave flattering presage of a wise and equitable administration. The very morning after he had been solemnly 10 installed in office, and at the moment that he was making his breakfast from a prodigious earthen dish, filled with milk and Indian pudding, he was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of one Wandle Schoonhoven, a very important old burgher of New Amsterdam, who complained bitterly of one Barent Bleecker, inas- 15 much as he fraudulently refused to come to a settlement of accounts, seeing that there was a heavy balance in favour of the said Wandle. Governor Van Twiller, as I have already observed, was a man of few words, he was likewise a mortal enemy to multiplying writings—or being disturbed at his breakfast. Having therefore listened attentively to the statement of Wandle Schoon- 20 hoven, giving an occasional grunt, as he shovelled a mighty spoonful of Indian pudding into his mouth—either as a sign that he relished the dish, or comprehended the story—he called unto him his constable, and pulling out of his breeches pocket a huge jack-knife, dispatched it after the defendant as a summons, accompanied by his tobacco box as a warrant.

This summary process was as effectual in those

simple days, as was the seal ring of the great Haroun Alraschid, among the true believers—the two parties, being confronted before him, each produced a book of accounts, written in a language and character that would have puzzled any but a High Dutch commentator, or a learned decypherer of Egyptian obelisks, to understand. The Sage Wouter took them one after the other, and having poised them in his hands, and attentively counted over the number of leaves, fell straightway into a very great doubt, and smoked for half an hour without saying a word; at length, laying his finger beside his nose, and shutting his eyes for a moment, with the air of a man who has just caught a subtle idea by the tail, he slowly took his pipe from his mouth, puffed forth a column of tobacco smoke, and with marvellous gravity and solemnity pronounced—that having carefully counted over the leaves and weighed the books, it was found, that one was just as thick and heavy as the other—therefore it was the final opinion of the court that the accounts were equally balanced—therefore Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should give Wandle a receipt—and the constable should pay the costs.

This decision being straightway made known, diffused general joy throughout New Amsterdam, for the people immediately perceived, that they had a very wise and equitable magistrate to rule over them. But its happiest effect was, that not another law suit took place throughout the whole of his administration—and the office of constable fell into such decay, that there was not one of those lossel³ scouts known in the province for many years. I am the more particular in dwelling on this transaction, not only because I deem it one of the most sage and righteous judgments on record, and well worthy the attention of modern magistrates, but because it was a miraculous event in the history of the renowned Wouter—being the only time he was ever known to come to a decision, in the whole course of his life.

CHAPTER IV

Containing further particulars of the Golden Age, and what constituted a fine Lady and Gentleman in the days of Walter the Doubter.

In this dulcet period of my history, when the beauteous island of Mannahata presented a scene, the very counterpart of those glowing pic-

tures drawn by old Hesiod of the golden reign of Saturn, there was a happy ignorance, an honest simplicity prevalent among its inhabitants, which were I even able to depict, would be but little understood by the degenerate age for which I am doomed to write. Even the female sex, those arch innovators upon the tranquillity, the honesty, and grey-beard customs of society, seemed for a while to conduct themselves with incredible sobriety and comeliness, and indeed behaved almost as if they had not been sent into the world, to bother mankind, baffle philosophy, and confound the universe.

Their hair untortured by the abominations of art, was scrupulously pomatomed back from their foreheads with a candle, and covered with a little cap of quilted calico, which fitted exactly to their heads. Their petticoats of linsey woolsey, were striped with a variety of gorgeous dyes, rivalling the many coloured robes of Iris—though I must confess these gallant garments were rather short, scarce reaching below the knee; but then they made up in the number, which generally equalled that of the gentlemen's small-clothes; and what is still more praiseworthy, they were all of their own manufacture—of which circumstance, as may well be supposed, they were not a little vain.

These were the honest days, in which every woman staid at home, read the bible and wore pockets—aye, and that too of a goodly size, fashioned with patch-work into many curious devices, and ostentatiously worn on the outside. These in fact, were convenient receptacles, where all good housewives carefully stowed away such things as they wished to have at hand; by which means they often came to be incredibly crammed—and I remember there was a story current when I was a boy, that the lady of Wouter Van Twiller, having occasion to empty her right pocket in search of a wooden ladle, the contents filled three corn baskets, and the utensil was at length discovered lying among some rubbish in one corner—but we must not give too much faith to all these stories, the anecdotes of these remote periods being very subject to exaggeration.

Beside these notable pockets, they likewise wore scissars and pincushions suspended from their girdles by red ribbands, or among the more opulent and shewy classes, by brass and even silver chains—indubitable tokens of thrifty housewives and industrious spinsters. I cannot say much in vindication of the shortness of the petti-

³ Lossel (or losel), worthless.

coats; it doubtless was introduced for the purpose of giving the stockings a chance to be seen, which were generally of blue worsted with magnificent red clocks—or perhaps to display a well turned ankle, and a neat, though serviceable foot; set off by a high-heel'd leathern shoe, with a large and splendid silver buckle. Thus we find, that the gentle sex in all ages, have shewn the same disposition to infringe a little upon the laws of decorum, in order to betray a lurking beauty, or gratify an innocent love of finery.

From the sketch here given it will be seen, that our good grandmothers differed considerably in their ideas of a fine figure, from their scantily dressed descendants of the present day. A fine lady, in those times, waddled under more clothes even on a fair summer's day, than would have clad the whole bevy of a modern ball room. Nor were they the less admired by the gentlemen in consequence thereof. On the contrary, the greatness of a lover's passion seemed to encrease in proportion to the magnitude of its object—and a voluminous damsel, arrayed in a dozen of petticoats, was declared by a low-dutch sonneteer of the province, to be radiant as a sunflower, and luxuriant as a full blown cabbage. Certain it is, that in those days, the heart of a lover could not contain more than one lady at a time; whereas the heart of a modern gallant has often room enough to accommodate half a dozen—The reason of which I conclude to be, that either the hearts of the gentlemen have grown larger, or the persons of the ladies smaller—this however is a question for physiologists to determine.

But there was a secret charm in these petticoats, which no doubt entered into the consideration of the prudent gallant. The wardrobe of a lady was in those days her only fortune; and she who had a good stock of petticoats and stockings, was as absolutely an heiress, as is a Kamschatka damsel with a store of bear skins, or a Lapland belle with a plenty of rein deer. The ladies therefore, were very anxious to display these powerful attractions to the greatest advantage; and the best rooms in the house instead of being adorned with caricatures of dame nature, in water colours and needle work, were always hung round with abundance of home-spun garments; the manufacture and property of the females—a piece of laudable ostentation that still prevails among the heiresses of our dutch villages. Such were the beauteous belles of the ancient city of New Am-

sterdam, rivalling in primæval simplicity of manners, the renowned and courtly dames, so loftily sung by Dan Homer—who tells us that the princess Nausicaa, washed the family linen, and the fair Penelope wove her own petticoats.

The gentlemen in fact, who figured in the circles of the gay world in these ancient times, corresponded in most particulars, with the beauteous damsels whose smiles they were ambitious to deserve. True it is, their merits would make but a very inconsiderable impression, upon the heart of a modern fair; they neither drove in their curricles nor sported their tandems, for as yet those gaudy vehicles were not even dreamt of—neither did they distinguish themselves by their brilliance at the table, and their consequent rencou[n]tres with watchmen, for our forefathers were of too pacific a disposition to need those guardians of the night, every soul throughout the town being in full snore before nine o'clock. Neither did they establish their claims by gentility at the expense of their taylors—for as yet those offenders against the pockets of society, and the tranquillity of all aspiring young gentlemen, were unknown in New Amsterdam; every good housewife made the clothes of her husband and family, and even the goede vrouw of Van Twiller himself, thought it no disparagement to cut out her husband's linsey woolsey galligaskins.

Not but what there were some two or three youngsters who manifested the first dawns of what is called fire and spirit. Who held all labour in contempt; skulked about docks and market places; loitered in the sun shine; squandered what little money they could procure at hustle cap and chuck farthing, swore, boxed, fought cocks, and raced their neighbours' horses—in short who promised to be the wonder, the talk and abomination of the town, had not their stylish career been unfortunately cut short, by an affair of honour with a whipping post.

Far other, however, was the truly fashionable gentleman of those days—his dress, which served for both morning and evening, street and drawing room, was a linsey woolsey coat, made perhaps by the fair hands of the mistress of his affections, and gallantly bedecked with abundance of large brass buttons.—Half a score of breeches heightened the proportions of his figure—his shoes were decorated by enormous copper buckles—a low crowned broad brimmed hat overshadowed his burly visage, and his hair dangled

down his back, in a prodigious queue of eel skin.

Thus equipped, he would manfully sally forth with pipe in mouth to besiege some fair damsel's obdurate heart—not such a pipe, good reader, as that which Acis did sweetly tune in praise of his Galatea, but one of true delft manufacture and furnished with a charge of fragrant Cow-pen tobacco. With this would he resolutely set himself down before the fortress, and rarely failed in the process of time to smoke the fair enemy into a surrender, upon honourable terms.

Such was the happy reign of Wouter Van Twiller, celebrated in many a long forgotten song as the real golden age, the rest being nothing but counterfeit copper-washed coin. In that delightful period, a sweet and holy calm reigned over the whole province. The Burgomaster smoked his pipe in peace—the substantial solace of his domestic house, his well petticoated *yffrouw*, after her daily cares were done, sat soberly at her door, with arms crossed over her apron of snowy white, without being insulted by ribald street walkers or vagabond boys—those unlucky urchins, who do so infest our streets, displaying under the roses of youth, the thorns and briars of iniquity. Then it was that the lover with ten breeches and the damsel with petticoats of half a score indulged in all the innocent endearments of virtuous love, without fear and without reproach—for what had that virtue to fear, which was defended by a shield of good linsey woolseys, equal at least to the seven bull hides of the invincible Ajax.

Thrice happy, and never to be forgotten age! when every thing was better than it has ever been since, or ever will be again—when Buttermilk channel was quite dry at low water—when the shad in the Hudson were all salmon, and when the moon shone with a pure and resplendent whiteness, instead of that melancholy yellow light, which is the consequence of her sickening at the abominations she every night witnesses in this degenerate age!

RIP VAN WINKLE

A POSTHUMOUS WRITING OF
DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER
(1819)

The basis of this story, which seems so thoroughly American, is an old folk legend which in various

forms is found in many countries. It is not native to the Hudson River region. Several German versions of the legend may have been known to Irving. (See his Note at the end of the story and Henry O. Pochmann, "Irving's German Sources in *The Sketch Book*," *Studies in Philology*, XXVII, 477-507, July, 1930.) Perhaps when he wrote the story, Irving also recalled his visit to Abbotsford and Scott's account of Thomas the Rhymer. Irving's meeting with Scott had stimulated his desire to give America "a colour of romance and tradition" like that of lowland Scotland, for Scott, as Irving wrote in his notebook, had "tied the charms of poetry on every river hill & grey rock [and] made the desert to blossom as the rose." In "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" Irving, anticipating the local-color writers of the later nineteenth century, wrote our first great short stories.

"Rip Van Winkle" is remarkable for its pictorial qualities. Irving was a friend of Washington Allston and C. R. Leslie. It is significant that he called his book *The Sketch Book* and used the pen name "Geoffrey Crayon," for he thought of himself as a painter who employed words instead of brush or pencil. The impulse that led Irving to write the story was akin to that which moved the so-called Hudson River School of painters. Among these were Thomas Cole, who painted the "Falls of the Catskill" and who spent his last years in the Catskill region, and John B. Kensett, who painted "Sunset on the Adirondacks" and "Hudson River from Fort Putnam."

In this story as in other numbers of *The Sketch Book* Irving dwells on "mutability" and laments the "dilapidations of time." When he wrote the story in Birmingham, England, he was remembering his youthful rambles through the Hudson River country and wondering what changes time had brought to the people who lived there. At the time he wrote the story, a long period of European war and revolution had recently come to an end. Men were discovering that their world was not the same as that which had prevailed before the fall of the Bastille. Rip Van Winkle's long sleep, it should be noted, extended through the American Revolution, which had brought about the greatest changes yet experienced in American life. (For the famous play, based on Irving's story and notable for Joseph Jefferson's acting in the role of Rip, see A. H. Quinn's *Representative American Plays* and his *History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War*.)

The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, and the manners of the de-

scendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics, whereas he found the old burghers, and still more their wives, rich in that legendary lore so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farmhouse, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a book-worm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned, on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work, and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say, that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labours. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbours, and grieve the spirit of some friend, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection; yet his errors and follies are remembered "more in sorrow than in anger," and it begins to be suspected, that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear by many folk whose good opinion is well worth having, particularly by certain biscuit-bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their New-year cakes, and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to the being stamped on a Waterloo medal or a Queen Anne's farthing.

*By Woden, God of Saxons,
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday,
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylike day in which I creep into
My sepulchre—*

CARTWRIGHT.

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lord-
ing it over the surrounding country. Every
change of season, every change of weather, in-
deed, every hour of the day, produces some

change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and
light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voy-
ager may have descried the light smoke curling
up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam
among the trees, just where the blue tints of the
upland melt away into the fresh green of the
nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great
antiquity, having been founded by some of the
Dutch colonists, in the early times of the prov-
ince, just about the beginning of the government
of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in
peace!) and there were some of the houses of the
original settlers standing within a few years, built
of small yellow bricks brought from Holland,
having latticed windows and gable fronts, sur-
mounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very
houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly
time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many
years since, while the country was yet a province
of Great Britain, a simple good-natured fellow,
of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a de-
scendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gal-
lantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant,
and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Chris-
tina. He inherited, however, but little of the mar-
tial character of his ancestors. I have observed
that he was a simple good-natured man; he was
moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient hen-
pecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circum-
stance might be owing that meekness of spirit
which gained him such universal popularity; for
those men are most apt to be obsequious and con-
ciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of
shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are
rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery fur-
nace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain lec-
ture is worth all the sermons in the world for
teaching the virtues of patience and long-
suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in
some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing;
and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among

all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone-fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to

console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village; which held its session on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor

of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from the distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air: "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and, giving a loud growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the

glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphi theatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their

visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling

aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the weebegone party at nine-pins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip—"what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle!"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrustated with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and, if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but, to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape-vines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle

crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done?—the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and his gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with everyone in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—"That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This

was an unkind cut indeed—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. The desolateness overcame all his con-

nubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence. He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there was now reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folks about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of hand-bills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of Congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politi-

cians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tip-toe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?" Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "What brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"—"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king. God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders—"A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, "Where's Nicholas Vedder?"

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—Congress—Stony Point;—he had not courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

"God knows," exclaimed he, at his wits' end; "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

"What is your name, my good woman?" he asked.

"Judith Gardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by

the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

5 "Where's your mother?"

"Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England pedler."

10 There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am your father!" cried he—"Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?"

15 All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, "Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbour—Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

20 Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks: and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

25 It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the *Half-moon*; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen

them in their old Dutch dresses playing at nine-pins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast

up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed at first to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunderstorm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine-pins; and it is a common wish of all hen-pecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

NOTE.—The foregoing Tale, one would suspect, had been suggested to Mr. Knickerbocker by a little German superstition about the Emperor Frederick *der Rothbart*, and the Kypphaüser mountain: the subjoined note, however, which he had appended to the tale, shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his usual fidelity:

"The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvellous events and appearances. Indeed, I have heard many stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson, all of which were too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain; nay, I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice, and signed with a cross, in the justice's own handwriting. The story, therefore, is beyond the possibility of doubt. D.K."

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

1789 - 1851

*And I honor the man who is willing to sink
Half his present repute for the freedom to think,
And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
Will risk t' other half for the freedom to speak,
Caring naught for the vengeance the mob has in store,
Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower.*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *A Fable for Critics*.

The social duties of a gentleman are of a high order. The class to which he belongs is the natural repository of the manners, tastes, tone, and, to a certain extent, of the principles of a country. They who imagine this portion of the community useless, drones who consume without producing, have not studied society, or they have listened to the suggestions of personal envy, instead of consulting history and facts. If the laborer is indispensable to civilization, so is also the gentleman. While the one produces, the other directs his skill to those arts which raise the polished man above the barbarian. The last brings his knowledge and habits to bear upon industry, and, taking the least favorable view of his claims, the indulgence of his very luxuries encourages the skill that contributes to the comforts of the lowest.

. . . the social duties of an American gentleman, in particular, require of him a tone of feeling and a line of conduct that are of the last importance to the country. One of the first of his obligations is to be a guardian of the liberties of his fellow citizens.

—COOPER, *The American Democrat* (1838).

James Cooper (he added his mother's family name *Fenimore* in 1826) was born on September 15, 1789. He was eighteen years younger than Scott, with whom he has often been compared, six years younger than Irving, and five years older than Bryant. Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, but when he was thirteen months old, the family removed to Lake Otsego in southern New York, where his father owned a vast tract of land. Judge William Cooper, the Federalist father, reminds one of the landed patroons of New York State, and even more of the great planter landowners of the South. The novelist himself grew up to

be primarily a country gentleman with conservative social sympathies and democratic political principles. During Cooper's boyhood the Cooperstown region was passing out of the frontier stage. In *The Pioneers* (1823), which Francis Parkman the historian considered the best of the Leather-Stocking Tales, Cooper gave a faithful picture of the semi-frontier life of his boyhood. Contrary to the general opinion, there were no wild Indians in that section during Cooper's early years.

There is little in the first thirty years of Cooper's life to lead one to expect him to become a writer of fiction. He seems primarily a country gentleman or a man of affairs rather than a man of letters. Fortunately, however, when accident did turn him to writing, he was equipped with a first-hand acquaintance with important unexploited literary materials. No earlier writer, in either England or America, had his intimate knowledge of the sea and sailors or of the American forest and the frontier types that inhabited it.

After being prepared for college, chiefly by an English rector at Albany, Cooper entered Yale at the age of thirteen. At that time President Timothy Dwight was trying to enforce a stricter system of discipline upon the students. In some way the independent, high-spirited Cooper incurred the displeasure of the authorities and was required to leave college in the summer of 1806. The family tradition is that Cooper's offense was setting off an explosion in another student's room by pushing a rag full of powder through the keyhole.

What was now to be done with the seventeen-year-old boy who had been dismissed from college? A literary career was probably the last to be thought of by either father or son. Cooper went to sea, as Melville did some years later. After serving as foremast hand on a merchant ship, he was, on January 1, 1808, commissioned as Midshipman in the U. S. Navy, the history of which he was later to write. Late in 1808 he was sent to Oswego on Lake Ontario—the scene of *The Pathfinder* (1840)—to help build ships for the Navy. In 1810 he asked for a year's furlough and at the end of his leave he resigned his position. His father was now dead; and moreover, he was in love. Susan Augusta DeLancey, whom he married in 1811, came of a prominent landed family in Westchester County, New York—the scene of *The Spy* (1821). Some of the DeLanceys had been Tories during the Revolution—which probably accounts for the fairness with which in *The Spy* Cooper treats the Tories and the British. The marriage doubtless strengthened Cooper's social conservatism, though it seems to have left unchanged his political sympathies. During the remainder of his life—except for his seven years in Europe—Cooper led the life of a country gentleman either in Westchester County or in the vicinity of Cooperstown.

In her *Family Memories* Cooper's daughter Susan describes the incident that prompted him at the age of thirty to write his first novel:

"A new novel had been brought from England in the last monthly packet; it was I think one of Mrs. Opie's or one of that school. [It was apparently Jane Austen's *Persuasion*.] My mother was not well, she was lying on the sofa, and he was reading this newly imported novel to her; it must have been very trashy; after a chapter or two he threw it aside exclaiming, 'I could write you a better book myself.' Our mother laughed at the idea as at the height of absurdity—he who disliked writing even a letter, that he should write a book! He persisted in his declaration, however, and almost immediately wrote the first pages of a tale [*Precaution* (1820)] not yet named, the scene laid in England as a matter of course."

NATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM-----1789-1830

But for Mrs. Cooper's encouragement, the novel would probably never have been finished. Perhaps the author derived some encouragement from the fact that little Susan, hiding under a table, paid her tribute to the novelist's power by crying when a pathetic passage was read aloud to her mother. *Precaution* (1820)—for the publication of which Cooper had as a matter of course to pay out of his own pocket—was, as H. W. Boynton remarks in his biography, "a deliberate imitation of the pious-polite novel of Britain, feminine gender." Cooper was as far outside his proper field as he could well have got. Referring to his first two novels, he wrote in his *Letter to His Countrymen* (1834):

"Accident first made me a writer, and the same accident gave a direction to my pen. Ashamed to have fallen into the track of imitation, I endeavored to repair the wrong done to my own views, by producing a work that should be purely American, and of which love of country should be the theme."

The Spy (1821), which proved a remarkable success in England as well as in America, grew out of John Jay's story of an unnamed spy. Scott's historical romances, then at the height of their popularity, gave Cooper not so much a formula as a clue to a method of treating American life in fiction. The first volume of *The Spy* was actually set up in type before Cooper felt "a sufficient inducement to write a line of the second." In the Author's Introduction (1849) to a later edition of the story, Cooper pointed out a curious circumstance attending the writing of *The Spy*:

"As the second volume was slowly printing, from manuscript that was barely dry when it went into the compositor's hands, the publisher intimated that the work might grow to a length that would consume the profits. To set his mind at rest, the last chapter was actually written, printed, and paged, several weeks before the chapters which preceded it were even thought of."

The Pioneers (1823) was the first novel which Cooper wrote to please himself. In this, the first of the Leather-Stocking Tales, Cooper drew on his boyhood memories of the Coopers-town region. Here he introduced Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook, who in the later stories are treated less realistically. *The Pilot*, the first of Cooper's sea tales, had an accidental origin. At a dinner which Cooper attended in New York City in 1822 the company were discussing the new Scottish novel, *The Pirate* (1822), and speculating as to whether or not Scott was the author of this and the rest of the Waverley novels. The general opinion of the diners was that the author of *The Pirate* must have been a sailor; and hence that Scott could not be its author. Cooper vigorously dissented and maintained that *The Pirate* was the work of a landsman with no intimate knowledge of the sea or ships. When he went home, he said to Mrs. Cooper: "I must write one more book, a sea tale to show what can be done in this way by a sailor." Receiving little encouragement from friends who had seen the manuscript, he resolved to try it on his old sailor friend, William Shubrick. The result is best told in Cooper's own words:

"I read a chapter to Shubrick, which contained an account of a ship working off-shore in a gale. My listener betrayed interest as we proceeded, until he could no longer keep his seat. He paced the room furiously till I got through, and just as I laid down the paper he exclaimed, 'It's all very well, but you have let your jib stand too long, my fine fellow!'"

1789-1851-----JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

In *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and *The Prairie* (1827) Cooper, at his wife's suggestion, resurrected Leather-Stocking and Chingachgook. *The Last of the Mohicans* differs widely from *The Pioneers*; it is an exciting romance of adventure. The weaker aspects of Leather-Stocking and Chingachgook are in abeyance, and the virtues of the frontier scout and the Indian warrior come to the front. Cooper is always at his best in describing a chase, whether on sea or land; and *The Last of the Mohicans* consists of two long pursuits with scant breathing space in the middle. The clue to Cooper's merits as a story-teller is suggested by H. W. Boynton:

"Never an artist, never self-critical or careful of his medium, he gained his powerful effects, like Byron, through the sheer vitality of his inspiration. He was the improvisatore, the story-teller in the bazaar, swept on by his own perhaps crude but certainly illumined sense of the romantic, the picturesque, the basically human-natural. His art, to which academic criticism has condescended for more than a century, was there [in *The Spy*], was living, still lives. You can no more destroy it by picking out its solecisms, its faults of haste, its banalities, than you can kill Byron's work in like manner."

The Prairie (1827), in which Leather-Stocking dies, was completed in Europe, whither Cooper had taken his family for a seven years' stay. His health was poor; he wished his daughters to learn French and Italian; and he hoped, in the absence of an international copyright law, to protect his rights to his books in Europe, where they were now extremely popular. In Europe Cooper was a staunch champion of his country. Irritated by the unfair accounts of America given by British travelers and reviewers, he tried to correct them in his *Notions of the Americans* (1828). He published three novels—*The Bravo* (1831), *The Heidenmauer* (1832), and *The Headsman* (1833)—to show his countrymen how European political systems contrasted with their own.

During the seven years Cooper lived abroad, the Jacksonian revolution had been accomplished; and on his return he found a different America from that which he had left. The reaction of the cosmopolitan novelist was not very dissimilar to that of Mrs. Trollope or Dickens. He put his shrewd and sensible criticism of American manners into *Homeward Bound* (1838) and *Home as Found* (1838), but his genius deserted him. If he had had the technique of a Sinclair Lewis, he might have written a better book than *Main Street* (1920). But Cooper could not write a good novel of manners, and he made the mistake of putting into *Home as Found* a petty squabble which he had with a certain element in Cooperstown. Cooper was right in his criticisms of American life, but his thin-skinned countrymen could not endure criticism, even from a popular American novelist. Much of his time in later years was spent in suing various newspapers for libel. He did a genuine but again unpopular service at a time when personalities and personal abuse filled the press. It was doubtless with these controversies in mind that Cooper requested that no biography of him be written.

Fortunately, he resumed the Leather-Stocking Tales with *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1841), which he considered better than the three earlier tales in the series. Cooper was a thorough gentleman, but for some reason he could seldom make his ladies and gentlemen live in his novels; nor are his middle-class characters much better. It is only the characters drawn from the humbler social circles that come to life in his pages—above all, his

NATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM-----1789-1830

Indians and his frontiersmen. In one of his delightful Roundabout Papers, "On a Peal of Bells," Thackeray wrote of Cooper's characters as compared with those of Scott:

"Much as I like those most unassuming, manly, unpretending gentlemen, I have to own that I think the heroes of another writer, viz.:

LEATHER-STOCKING,

UNCAS,

HARDHEART,

TOM COFFIN,

are quite the equals of Scott's men; perhaps Leather-Stocking is better than any one in 'Scott's lot.' *La Longue Carabine* is one of the great prize-men of fiction. He ranks with your Uncle Toby, Sir Roger de Coverley, Falstaff—heroic figures, all—American or British, and the artist has deserved well of his country who devised them."

The creation of great characters is perhaps the rarest and finest of literary achievements. Any second-rate writer of today could give Cooper lessons in the technique of narration or in style, but what living American writer can create such a character as Leather-Stocking? Hawkeye, to give him another name, is more typically American than one is likely to realize at first. When America entered the World War, a prominent Frenchman, wishing to find some symbol for the newly roused spirit of America, said, "The spirit of Leather-Stocking is awake."

For Cooper's life, see William Cullen Bryant's "Discourse on the Life and Genius of Cooper," *The Correspondence of James Fenimore-Cooper* (1922), and the biographies by T. R. Lounsbury (1883), H. W. Boynton (1931), Marcel Clavel (1938), and Robert E. Spiller, *Fenimore Cooper: Critic of His Times* (1931). There is an excellent bibliography by Spiller and P. C. Blackburn. See also Spiller's volume of selections (1936) in the American Writers Series. There is an excellent edition of *The Spy* by Tremaine McDowell and of *The Deerslayer* by Gregory Paine; the latter contains an excellent discussion of Cooper's Indians (see also Paine's article in *Studies in Philology*, XXIII, 16-39, January, 1926). The most notable critical essay on Cooper is in William Crary Brownell, *American Prose Masters* (1909). See also Stanley T. Williams's chapter on Cooper in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). For further references, see Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

[Leather-Stocking Kills His First Indian]

from *THE DEERSLAYER* (1841)

The scene of *The Deerslayer* is Lake Otsego, on which Cooperstown now stands. Two white men have recently been captured by Indians. Deerslayer is the only white man left to defend two girls who live in Hutter's Muskrat Castle (the ark) in the middle of the lake. It is essential that he keep the In-

dians from seizing any of the boats belonging to the whites.

CHAPTER VII

"Clear, placid Leman! Thy contrasted lake
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction: once I loved

*Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reprov'd,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so
moved."*

BYRON.

Day had fairly dawned before the young man, whom we have left in the situation described in the last chapter, again opened his eyes. This was no sooner done, than he started up, and looked about him with the eagerness of one who suddenly felt the importance of accurately ascertaining his precise position. His rest had been deep and undisturbed; and when he awoke, it was with a clearness of intellect and a readiness of resources that were much needed at that particular moment. The sun had not risen, it is true, but the vault of heaven was rich with the winning softness that "brings and shuts the day," while the whole air was filled with the carols of birds, the hymns of the feathered tribe. These sounds first told Deerslayer the risks he ran. The air, for wind it could scarce be called, was still light, it is true, but it had increased a little in the course of the night, and as the canoes were mere feathers on the water, they had drifted twice the expected distance; and, what was still more dangerous, had approached so near the base of the mountain that here rose precipitously from the eastern shore, as to render the carols of the birds plainly audible. This was not the worst. The third canoe had taken the same direction, and was slowly drifting towards a point where it must inevitably touch, unless turned aside by a shift of wind, or human hands. In other respects, nothing presented itself to attract attention, or to awake alarm. The castle stood on its shoal, nearly abreast of the canoes, for the drifts had amounted to miles in the course of the night, and the ark lay fastened to its piles, as both had been left so many hours before.

As a matter of course, Deerslayer's attention was first given to the canoe ahead. It was already quite near the point, and a very few strokes of the paddle sufficed to tell him that it must touch before he could possibly overtake it. Just at this moment, too, the wind inopportunately freshened, rendering the drift of the light craft much more rapid than certain. Feeling the impossibility of preventing a contact with the land, the young man wisely determined not to heat himself with unnecessary exertions; but, first looking to the priming of his piece, he proceeded slowly and

warily towards the point, taking care to make a little circuit, that he might be exposed on only one side, as he approached.

The canoe adrift, being directed by no such intelligence, pursued its proper way, and grounded on a small sunken rock, at the distance of three or four yards from the shore. Just at that moment, Deerslayer had got abreast of the point, and turned the bows of his own boat to the land; first casting loose his tow, that his movements might be unencumbered. The canoe hung an instant on the rock; then it rose a hair's-breadth on an almost imperceptible swell of the water, swung round, floated clear, and reached the strand. All this the young man noted, but it neither quickened his pulses, nor hastened his hand. If any one had been lying in wait for the arrival of the waif, he must be seen, and the utmost caution in approaching the shore became indispensable; if no one was in ambush, hurry was unnecessary. The point being nearly diagonally opposite to the Indian encampment, he hoped the last, though the former was not only possible, but probable; for the savages were prompt in adopting all the expedients of their particular modes of warfare, and quite likely had many scouts searching the shores for craft to carry them off to the castle. As a glance at the lake from any height or projection, would expose the smallest object on its surface, there was little hope that either of the canoes would pass unseen; and Indian sagacity needed no instruction to tell which way a boat or a log would drift, when the direction of the wind was known. As Deerslayer drew nearer and nearer to the land, the stroke of his paddle grew slower, his eye became more watchful, and his ears and nostrils almost dilated with the effort to detect any lurking danger. 'Twas a trying moment for a novice, nor was there the encouragement which even the timid sometimes feel, when conscious of being observed and commended. He was entirely alone, thrown on his own resources, and was cheered by no friendly eye, emboldened by no encouraging voice. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, the most experienced veteran in forest warfare could not have conducted better. Equally free from recklessness and hesitation, his advance was marked by a sort of philosophical prudence, that appeared to render him superior to all motives but those which were best calculated to effect his purpose. Such was the commencement of a

career in forest exploits, that afterwards rendered this man, in his way, and under the limits of his habits and opportunities, as renowned as many a hero whose name has adorned the pages of works more celebrated than legends simple as ours can ever become.

When about a hundred yards from the shore, Deerslayer rose in the canoe, gave three or four vigorous strokes with the paddle, sufficient of themselves to impel the bark to land, and then quickly laying aside the instrument of labour, he seized that of war. He was in the very act of raising the rifle, when a sharp report was followed by the buzz of a bullet that passed so near his body, as to cause him involuntarily to start. The next instant Deerslayer staggered, and fell his whole length in the bottom of the canoe. A yell—it came from a single voice—followed, and an Indian leaped from the bushes upon the open area of the point, bounding towards the canoe. This was the moment the young man desired. He rose on the instant, and levelled his own rifle at his uncovered foe; but his finger hesitated about pulling the trigger on one whom he held at such a disadvantage. This little delay, probably, saved the life of the Indian, who bounded back into the cover as swiftly as he had broken out of it. In the meantime Deerslayer had been swiftly approaching the land, and his own canoe reached the point just as his enemy disappeared. As its movements had not been directed, it touched the shore a few yards from the other boat; and though the rifle of his foe had to be loaded, there was not time to secure his prize, and to carry it beyond danger, before he would be exposed to another shot. Under the circumstances, therefore, he did not pause an instant, but dashed into the woods and sought a cover.

On the immediate point there was a small open area, partly in native grass, and partly beach, but a dense fringe of bushes lined its upper side. This narrow belt of dwarf vegetation passed, one issued immediately into the high and gloomy vaults of the forest. The land was tolerably level for a few hundred feet, and then it rose precipitously in a mountainside. The trees were tall, large, and so free from under-brush, that they resembled vast columns, irregularly scattered, upholding a dome of leaves. Although they stood tolerably close together, for their ages and size, the eye could penetrate to considerable distances; and bodies of men, even, might have engaged

beneath their cover, with concert and intelligence.

Deerslayer knew that his adversary must be employed in re-loading, unless he had fled. The former proved to be the case, for the young man had no sooner placed himself behind a tree, than he caught a glimpse of the arm of the Indian, his body being concealed by an oak, in the very act of forcing the leathered bullet home. Nothing would have been easier than to spring forward, and decide the affair by a close assault on his unprepared foe; but every feeling of Deerslayer revolted at such a step, although his own life had just been attempted from a cover. He was yet unpractised in the ruthless expedients of savage warfare, of which he knew nothing except by tradition and theory, and it struck him as an unfair advantage to assail an unarmed foe. His colour had heightened, his eye frowned, his lips were compressed, and all his energies were collected and ready; but, instead of advancing to fire, he dropped his rifle to the usual position of a sportsman in readiness to catch his aim, and muttered to himself, unconscious that he was speaking—

“No, no—that may be red-skin warfare, but it’s not a Christian’s gifts. Let the miscreant charge, and then we’ll take it out like men; for the canoe he *must* not, and *shall* not have. No, no; let him have time to load, and God will take care of the right!”

All this time the Indian had been so intent on his own movements, that he was even ignorant that his enemy was in the wood. His only apprehension was, that the canoe would be recovered and carried away, before he might be in readiness to prevent it. He had sought the cover from habit, but was within a few feet of the fringe of bushes, and could be at the margin of the forest, in readiness to fire, in a moment. The distance between him and his enemy was about fifty yards, and the trees were so arranged by nature that the line of sight was not interrupted, except by the particular trees behind which each party stood.

His rifle was no sooner loaded, than the savage glanced around him, and advanced incautiously as regarded the real, but stealthily as respected the fancied position of his enemy, until he was fairly exposed. Then Deerslayer stepped from behind his own cover, and hailed him.

“This-a-way, red-skin; this-a-way, if you’re looking for me,” he called out. “I’m young in war,

but not so young as to stand on an open beach to be shot down like an owl, by day-light. It rests on yourself whether it's peace, or war, atween us; for my gifts are white gifts, and I'm not one of them that thinks it valiant to slay human mortals, singly, in the woods."

The savage was a good deal startled by this sudden discovery of the danger he ran. He had a little knowledge of English, however, and caught the drift of the other's meaning. He was also too well schooled to betray alarm, but, dropping the butt of his rifle to the earth, with an air of confidence, he made a gesture of lofty courtesy. All this was done with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to consider no man his superior. In the midst of this consummate acting, however, the volcano that raged within caused his eyes to glare, and his nostrils to dilate, like those of some wild beast that is suddenly prevented from taking the fatal leap.

"Two canoe," he said, in the deep guttural tones of his race, holding up the number of fingers he mentioned, by way of preventing mistakes; "one for you—one for me."

"No, no, Mingo, that will never do. You own neither; and neither shall you have, as long as I can prevent it. I know it's war atween your people and mine, but that's no reason why human mortals should slay each other, like savage creatures that meet in the woods; go your way, then, and leave me to go mine. The world is large enough for us both; and when we meet fairly in battle, why, the Lord will order the fate of each of us."

"Good!" exclaimed the Indian; "my brother missionary—great talk; all about Manitou."

"Not so—not so, warrior. I'm not good enough for the Moravians, and am too good for most of the other vagabonds that preach about in the woods. No, no, I'm only a hunter, as yet, though afore the peace is made, 'tis like enough there'll be occasion to strike a blow at some of your people. Still, I wish it to be done in fair fight, and not in a quarrel about the ownership of a miserable canoe."

"Good! My brother very young—but he very wise. Little warrior—great talker. Chief, sometimes, in council."

"I don't know this, nor do I say it, Indian," returned Deerslayer, colouring a little at the ill-concealed sarcasm of the other's manner; "I look forward to a life in the woods, and I only hope

it may be a peaceful one. All young men must go on the warpath, when there's occasion, but war isn't needfully massacre. I've seen enough of the last, this very night, to know that Providence frowns on it; and I now invite you to go your own way, while I go mine; and hope that we may part fri'nds."

"Good! My brother has two scalp—grey hair under t'other. Old wisdom—young tongue."

Here the savage advanced with confidence, his hand extended, his face smiling, and his whole bearing denoting amity and respect. Deerslayer met his offered friendship in a proper spirit, and they shook hands cordially, each endeavouring to assure the other of his sincerity and desire to be at peace.

"All have his own," said the Indian; "my canoe, mine; your canoe, your'n. Go look; if your'n, you keep; if mine, I keep."

"That's just, red-skin; though you must be wrong in thinking the canoe your property. Howsoever, seein' is believin', and we'll go down to the shore, where you may look with your own eyes; for it's likely you'll object to trustin' altogether to mine."

The Indian uttered his favourite exclamation of "good!" and then they walked side by side, towards the shore. There was no apparent distrust in the manner of either, the Indian moving in advance, as if he wished to show his companion that he did not fear turning his back to him. As they reached the open ground, the former pointed toward Deerslayer's boat, and said emphatically—

"No mine—pale-face canoe. *This* red-man's. No want other man's canoe—want his own."

"You're wrong, red-skin, you're altogether wrong. This canoe was left in old Hutter's keeping, and is his'n according to all law, red or white, till its owner comes to claim it. Here's the seats and the stitching of the bark to speak for themselves. No man ever know'd an Indian to turn off such work."

"Good! My brother little old—big wisdom. Indian no make him. White man's work."

"I'm glad you think so, for holding out to the contrary might have made ill blood atween us, every one having a right to take possession of his own. I'll just shove the canoe out of reach of dispute, at once, as the quickest way of settling difficulties."

While Deerslayer was speaking, he put a foot

against the end of the light boat, and giving a vigorous shove, he sent it out into the lake a hundred feet or more, where, taking the true current, it would necessarily float past the point, and be in no further danger of coming ashore. The savage started at this ready and decided expedient, and his companion saw that he cast a hurried and fierce glance at his own canoe, or that which contained the paddles. The change of manner, however, was but momentary, and then the Iroquois resumed his air of friendliness, and a smile of satisfaction.

"Good!" he repeated, with stronger emphasis than ever. "Young head, old mind. Know how to settle quarrel. Farewell, brother. He go to house in water—muskrat house—Indian go to camp; tell chiefs no find canoe."

Deerslayer was not sorry to hear this proposal, for he felt anxious to join the females, and he took the offered hand of the Indian very willingly. The parting words were friendly, and, while the red-man walked calmly towards the wood, with the rifle in the hollow of his arm, without once looking back in uneasiness or distrust, the white man moved towards the remaining canoe, carrying his piece in the same pacific manner, it is true, but keeping his eyes fastened on the movements of the other. This distrust, however, seemed to be altogether uncalled for, and, as if ashamed to have entertained it, the young man averted his look, and stepped carelessly up to his boat. Here he began to push the canoe from the shore, and to make his other preparations for departing. He might have been thus employed for a minute, when, happening to turn his face towards the land, his quick and certain eye told him, at a glance, the imminent jeopardy in which his life was placed. The black, ferocious eyes of the savage were glancing on him, like those of the crouching tiger, through a small opening in the bushes, and the muzzle of his rifle seemed already to be opening in a line with his own body.

Then, indeed, the long practice of Deerslayer, as a hunter, did him good service. Accustomed to fire with the deer on the bound, and often when the precise position of the animal's body had in a manner to be guessed at, he used the same expedients here. To cock and poise his rifle were the acts of a single moment, and a single motion; then, aiming almost without sighting, he fired

into the bushes where he knew a body ought to be, in order to sustain the appalling countenance, which alone was visible. There was not time to raise the piece any higher, or to take a more deliberate aim. So rapid were his movements, that both parties discharged their pieces at the same instant, the concussions mingling in one report. The mountains, indeed, gave back but a single echo. Deerslayer dropped his piece, and stood, with head erect, steady as one of the pines in the calm of a June morning, watching the result; while the savage gave the yell that has become historical for its appalling influence, leaped through the bushes, and came bounding across the open ground, flourishing a tomahawk. Still Deerslayer moved not, but stood with his unloaded rifle fallen against his shoulders, while, with a hunter's habits, his hands were mechanically feeling for the powder-horn and charger. When about forty feet from his enemy, the savage hurled his keen weapon; but it was with an eye so vacant, and a hand so unsteady and feeble, that the young man caught it by the handle, as it was flying past him. At that instant the Indian staggered and fell his whole length on the ground.

"I know'd it—I know'd it!" exclaimed Deerslayer, who was already preparing to force a fresh bullet into his rifle; "I know'd it must come to this, as soon as I had got the range from the creature's eyes. A man sights suddenly, and fires quick, when his own life's in danger; yes, I know'd it would come to this. I was about the hundredth part of a second too quick for him, or it might have been bad for me! The riptyle's bullet has just grazed my side—but, say what you will, for or aga'in 'em, a red-skin is by no means as sartain with powder and ball as a white man. Their gifts don't seem to lie that-a-way. Even Chingachgook, great as he is in other matters, isn't downright deadly with the rifle."

By this time the piece was reloaded, and Deerslayer, after tossing the tomahawk into the canoe, advanced to his victim, and stood over him, leaning on his rifle, in melancholy attention. It was the first instance in which he had seen a man fall in battle—it was the first fellow-creature against whom he had ever seriously raised his own hand. The sensations were novel; and regret, with the freshness of our better feelings, mingled with his triumph. The Indian was not dead, though shot directly through the body. He

lay on his back motionless, but his eyes, now full of consciousness, watched each action of his victor—as the fallen bird regards the fowler—jealous of every movement. The man probably expected the fatal blow which was to precede the loss of his scalp; or, perhaps he anticipated that this latter act of cruelty would precede his death. Deerslayer read his thoughts; and he found a melancholy satisfaction in relieving the apprehensions of the helpless savage.

“No, no, red-skin,” he said; “you’ve nothing more to fear from me. I am of a Christian stock, and scalping is not of my gifts. I’ll just make sartin of your rifle, and then come back and do you what sarvice I can. Though here I can’t stay much longer, as the crack of three rifles will be apt to bring some of your devils down upon me.”

The close of this was said in a sort of soliloquy, as the young man went in quest of the fallen rifle. The piece was found where its owner had dropped it, and was immediately put into the canoe. Laying his own rifle at its side, Deerslayer then returned and stood over the Indian again.

“All inimity atween you and me’s at an ind, red-skin,” he said; “and you may set your heart at rest, on the score of the scalp, or any further injury. My gifts are white, as I’ve told you; and I hope my conduct will be white also!”

Could looks have conveyed all they meant, it is probable Deerslayer’s innocent vanity, on the subject of colour would have been rebuked a little; but he comprehended the gratitude that was expressed in the eyes of the dying savage, without in the least detecting the bitter sarcasm that struggled with the better feeling.

“Water!” ejaculated the thirsty and unfortunate creature; “give poor Indian water.”

“Ay, water you shall have, if you drink the lake dry. I’ll just carry you down to it, that you may take your fill. This is the way, they tell me, with all wounded people—water is their greatest comfort and delight.”

So saying, Deerslayer raised the Indian in his arms, and carried him to the lake. Here he first helped him to take an attitude in which he could appease his burning thirst; after which he seated himself on a stone, and took the head of his wounded adversary in his own lap, and endeavoured to soothe his anguish, in the best manner he could.

“It would be sinful to me to tell you your time

hadn’t come, warrior,” he commenced, “and therefore I’ll not say it. You’ve passed the middle age, already, and, considerin’ the sort of lives ye lead, your days have been pretty well filled. The principal thing, now, is to look forward to what comes next. Neither red-skin nor pale-face, on the whole, calculates much on sleepin’ for ever; but both expect to live in another world. Each has his gifts, and will be judged by ’em, and, I suppose, you’ve thought these matters over enough, not to stand in need of sarmons if you’ve been a just Indian; if an unjust, you’ll meet your desarts in another way. I’ve my own idees about these things; but you’re too old and exper’enced to need any explanations from one as young as I.”

“Good!” ejaculated the Indian, whose voice retained its depth even as life ebbed away; “young head—old wisdom!”

“It’s sometimes a consolation, when the ind comes, to know that them we’ve harmed, or *tried* to harm, forgive us. I suppose natur’ seeks this relief, by way of getting a pardon on ’arth; as we never can know whether He pardons, who is all in all, till judgment itself comes. It’s soothing to know that *any* pardon, at such times; and that, I conclude, is the secret. Now, as for myself, I overlook altogether your designs ag’in my life; first, because no harm came of ’em; next, because it’s your gifts, and natur’, and trainin’, and I ought not to have trusted you at all; and, finally and chiefly, because I can bear no ill-will to a dying man, whether heathen or Christian. So put your heart at ease, so far as I’m concerned; you know best what other matters ought to trouble you, or what ought to give you satisfaction, in so trying a moment.”

It is probable that the Indian had some of the fearful glimpses of the unknown state of being which God, in mercy, seems, at times, to afford to all the human race; but they were necessarily in conformity with his habits and prejudices. Like most of his people, and like too many of our own, he thought more of dying in a way to gain applause among those he left, than to secure a better state of existence, hereafter. While Deerslayer was speaking, his mind was a little bewildered, though he felt that the intention was good; and when he had done, a regret passed over his spirit that none of his own tribe were present to witness his stoicism, under extreme bodily suf-

fering, and the firmness with which he met his end. With the high, innate courtesy that so often distinguishes the Indian warrior, before he becomes corrupted by too much intercourse with the worst class of the white men, he endeavoured to express his thankfulness for the other's good intentions, and to let him understand that they were appreciated.

"Good!" he repeated, for this was an English word much used by the savages—"good—young head; young *heart*, too. *Old heart* tough; no shed tear. Hear Indian when he die, and no want to lie—what he call him?"

"Deerslayer is the name I bear now, though the Delawares have said that when I get back from this war-path I shall have a more manly title, provided I can 'arn one."

"That good name for boy—poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear *there*"—the savage had strength sufficient, under the strong excitement he felt, to raise a hand and tap the young man on his breast—"eye sartain—finger lightening—aim, death—great warrior soon. No Deerslayer—Hawkeye—Hawkeye—Hawkeye. Shake hand."

Deerslayer—or Hawkeye, as the youth was then first named, for in after years he bore the appellation throughout all that region—Deerslayer took the hand of the savage, whose last breath was drawn in that attitude, gazing in admiration at the countenance of a stranger, who had shown so much readiness, skill and firmness, in a scene that was equally trying and novel. When the reader remembers it is the highest gratification an Indian can receive to see his enemy betray weakness, he will be better able to appreciate the conduct which had extorted so great a concession, at such a moment.

"His spirit has fled!" said Deerslayer, in a suppressed, melancholy voice. "Ah's me—Well, to this we must all come, sooner or later; and he is happiest, let his skin be of what colour it may, who is best fitted to meet it. Here lies the body of, no doubt, a brave warrior, and the soul is already flying towards its heaven, or hell, whether that be a happy hunting-ground, a place scant of game; regions of glory, according to Moravian doctrine, or flames of fire! So it happens, too, as regards other matters! Here have old Hutter and Hurry Harry got themselves into difficulty, if they haven't got themselves into torment and death, and all for a bounty that luck offers to me

in what many would think a lawful and suitable manner. But not a farthing of such money shall cross my hand. White I was born, and white will I die; clinging to colour to the last, even though the King's Majesty, his governors, and all his councils, both at home and in the Colonies, forget from what they come, and where they hope to go, and all for a little advantage in warfare. No, no—warrior, hand of mine shall never molest your scalp, and so your soul may rest in peace on the p'int of making a decent appearance, when the body comes to join it, in your own land of spirits."

Deerslayer arose as soon as he had spoken. Then he placed the body of the dead man in a sitting posture, with its back against the little rock, taking the necessary care to prevent it from falling, or in any way settling into an attitude that might be thought unseemly by the sensitive, though wild notions of a savage. When this duty was performed, the young man stood gazing at the grim countenance of his fallen foe, in a sort of melancholy abstraction. As was his practice, however, a habit gained by living so much alone in the forest, he then began again to give utterance to his thoughts and feelings aloud.

"I didn't wish your life, red-skin," he said, "but you left me no choice atween killing, or being killed. Each party acted according to his gifts, I suppose, and blame can light on neither. You were treacherous, according to your natur' in war, and I was a little oversightful, as I'm apt to be in trusting others. Well, this is my first battle with a human mortal, though it's not likely to be the last. I have fou't most of the creatur's of the forest, such as bears, wolves, painters and catamounts, but this is the beginning with the red-skins. If I was Indian born, now, I might tell of this, or carry in the scalp, and boast of the expl'ite afore the whole tribe; or, if my inimy had only been even a bear, 'twould have been nat'ral and proper to let every body know what had happened; but I don't well see how I'm to let even Chingachgook into this secret, so long as it can be done only by boasting with a white tongue. And why should I wish to boast of it, after all? It's slaying a human, although he was a savage; and how do I know that he was a just Indian; and that he has not been taken away suddenly, to any thing but happy hunting-grounds? When it's onsartin whether good or evil has been done, the wisest way is not to be boastful—still, I *should*

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like Chingachgook to know that I haven't dis-
credited the Delawares, or my training!" - - -

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

1794-1878

He may not have been a great poet, but he was a great American.

—VERNON LOUIS PARRINGTON, *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927), II, 246.

*There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,
Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights
With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.*

.....

*Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,
But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm:
If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,
Like being stirred up with the very North Pole.*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *A Fable For Critics* (1848).

Bryant, who lived among the Knickerbockers but was not of them, was born on November 3, 1794—eleven years after Irving and five after Cooper. He was twenty-four years younger than Wordsworth, with whom he has often been compared. He was born in Cummington in western Massachusetts and grew up in the midst of some of the finest scenery in the state. When in 1845 Bryant saw the Wordsworth country, remarks his son-in-law and biographer, he "could easily have fancied himself transported from his own Western Massachusetts—the grand out-looks everywhere are so alike." The poet's father, Dr. Peter Bryant, was a Federalist, a physician, and a lover of poetry who encouraged his son Cullen to write verse. Among the poet's relatives there were other doctors and makers of verses. Although both father and son eventually became Unitarians, the poet's boyhood was much what one would have expected to find among the earlier Puritans. The following passages from Bryant's fragment of an autobiography throw light upon his boyhood:

"The boys of the generation to which I belonged were brought up under a system of discipline which put a far greater distance between parents and their children than now exists. . . . My grandfather was a disciplinarian of the stricter sort, and I can hardly find words to express the awe in which I stood of him—an awe so great as almost to prevent anything like affection on my part, although he

was in the main kind, and, certainly, never thought of being severe beyond what was necessary to maintain a proper degree of order in the family."

"In a community so religious I naturally acquired habits of devotion. My mother and grandmother had taught me, as soon as I could speak, the Lord's Prayer and other little petitions suited to childhood, and I may be said to have been nurtured on Watts' devout poems composed for children. The prayer of the publican in the New Testament ["God be merciful to me a sinner"] was often in my mouth, and I heard every variety of prayer at the Sunday evening services conducted by laymen in private houses. But I varied in my private devotions from these models, in one respect, namely, in supplicating, as I often did, that I might receive the gift of poetic genius, and write verses that might endure. . . . The Calvinistic system of divinity I adopted, of course, as I heard nothing else taught from the pulpit, and supposed it to be the accepted belief of the religious world."

"As soon as I was able to handle the lighter implements of agriculture I was employed in the summer season in farm work, under the tuition of my grandfather Snell, who taught me to plant and hoe corn and potatoes, to rake hay and reap wheat and oats with the sickle. . . . In raking hay my grandfather put me before him, and, if I did not make speed enough to keep out of his way, the teeth of his rake touched my heels. . . .

"My health was rather delicate from infancy and easily disturbed. Sometimes the tasks of the farm were too great for my strength, and brought on a sick headache. . . .

"So my time passed in study, diversified with labor and recreation. In the long winter evenings and the stormy winter days I read, with my elder brother, books from my father's library—not a large one, but well chosen."

"I was always from my earliest years a delighted observer of external nature—the splendors of a winter daybreak over the wide waste of snow seen from our windows, the glories of the autumnal woods, the gloomy approaches of the thunderstorm, and its departure amid sunshine and rainbows, the return of spring, with its flowers, and the first snowfall of winter. The poets fostered this taste in me, and though at the time I rarely heard such things spoken of, it was none the less cherished in my secret mind."

Cullen began to write verses at the age of eight. When he was thirteen, his father happened to see some lines which the boy had written about Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States. We quote them here partly as a specimen of Bryant's juvenile verse and partly as an indication of the extreme to which party feeling carried the New England Federalists:

*"And thou [Jefferson], the scorn of every patriot's name,
Thy country's ruin and thy council's shame!
Poor servile thing! derision of the brave!
Who erst from Tarleton fled to Carter's cave;
Thou, who, when menac'd by perfidious Gaul,
Didst prostrate to her whisker'd minion fall;
And when our cash her empty bags supply'd,
Didst meanly strive the foul disgrace to hide;*

*Go, wretch, resign the presidential chair,
 Disclose thy secret measures, foul or fair.
 Go, search with curious eye for hornèd frogs,
 Mid the wild wastes of Lousianian bogs;
 Or, where Ohio rolls his turbid stream,
 Dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme.
 Go, scan, Philosphist, thy Sally's charms,
 And sink supinely in her sable arms;
 But quit to abler hands the helm of state."*

The surprising thing is that the father—far from chastising the young satirist—encouraged him to expand the passage into a long poem. This, *The Embargo*, was published in 1808 in Boston at Dr. Bryant's expense.

The poet had been named for William Cullen, a distinguished Scottish physician; and the family expected him to follow in the father's profession. Cullen, however, had seen too much of the hard life of a country doctor, and the profession did not appeal to him. He was prepared for college by country ministers (the ministry was still the educated class in rural New England), who tutored him in Latin and Greek. The Greek influence upon the future translator of Homer was an important one. He entered Williams College at the age of fifteen, but withdrew before the end of his first year. He had expected to go to Yale the next year, but his father could not afford to send him. He studied law in much the same way as he had studied Greek and Latin. He was admitted to the bar in 1814 and practiced law for about nine years.

Meanwhile he had continued to write verse. His discovery of the late eighteenth-century Romantic poets—Wordsworth was to come later—turned him from Pope, heroic couplets, and satire to nature, melancholy, and blank verse. The Romantic influence, which we have noted in the case of Philip Freneau, affected Bryant more profoundly. The closing paragraph of the autobiographical fragment already mentioned indicates Bryant's reading at the time he wrote the first version of "Thanatopsis":

"About this time [the summer of 1811?] my father brought home, I think from one of his visits to Boston, the 'Remains of Henry Kirke White,' which had been republished in this country. I read the poems with great eagerness, and so often that I had committed several of them to memory, particularly the ode to the Rosemary. The melancholy tone which prevails in them deepened the interest with which I read them, for about that time I had, as young poets are apt to have, a liking for poetry of a querulous cast. I remember reading, at this time, that remarkable poem, Blair's 'Grave,' and dwelling with great pleasure upon its finer passages. I had the opportunity of comparing it with a poem on a kindred subject, that of Bishop Porteus on 'Death,' and of observing how much the verse of the obscure Scottish minister excelled in originality of thought and vigor of expression that of the English prelate. In my father's library I found a small, thin volume of the miscellaneous poems of Southey, to which he had not called my attention, containing some of the finest of Southey's shorter poems. I read it greedily. Cowper's poems had been in my hands from an early age, and I now passed from his shorter poems, which are generally mere rhymed prose, to his 'Task,' the finer passages of which supplied a form of blank verse that captivated my admiration."

The first version of "Thanatopsis," written when Bryant was only seventeen or eighteen, shows the influence of the so-called "Graveyard School" of British poets; the influence of Wordsworth appears in the revised and enlarged version which contains the famous conclusion. It is probable that in writing the earlier version Bryant had particularly in mind Henry Kirke White's poem, "Time." Bryant at that time seems to have thought himself, like White, doomed to an early death from consumption. The earlier version was published in the newly established *North American Review* in September, 1817. The only thing approaching a sensation which it produced occurred among the editors. One of them, Richard Henry Dana, Sr., wrote in 1846:

"Going into town one day while assisting E. T. Channing (now Professor) in the *North American Review* (1817), he read to me a couple of pieces of poetry which had just been sent to the *Review*—the 'Thanatopsis' and 'The Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood.' While C— was reading one of them I broke out, saying, 'That was never written on this side of the water'—and naturally enough, considering what American poetry had been up to that moment."

The editors of the *North American Review* were quick to recognize Bryant's talents, and they did what they could to prevent the young lawyer from deserting literature altogether. They induced him to write prose as well as verse for the *Review*. They got him the honor of reading a Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard, and they helped to arrange the publication of his poems in 1821. In that year Bryant married Miss Frances Fairchild, a farmer's daughter, to whom he addressed "Oh Fairest of the Rural Maids."

Before the publication of his *Poems* in 1821, Bryant had discovered Wordsworth. Dana tells the story:

"I never shall forget with what feeling my friend Bryant, some years ago, described to me the effect produced upon him by his meeting for the first time with Wordsworth's ballads. He said that, upon opening the book, a thousand springs seemed to gush up at once in his heart, and the face of Nature, of a sudden, to change into a strange freshness and life."

When in 1845 Bryant met Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, he was not particularly impressed with the English poet. He wrote in his diary at that time:

"Mr. Wordsworth was in the garden, in a white broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat; he received me very kindly; showed me over his grounds, his study, etc. Beautiful view of Windermere from his house, and of Rydal Water from part of his grounds. At six o'clock took tea with him, after having first looked at Stock Ghyll Force. He showed us the fall of the Rothay in Rydal Park, belonging to Lady Fleming. Left his house at ten o'clock in the evening."

Meanwhile Bryant had grown weary of the law. In "Green River" he speaks of himself as

"forced to drudge for the dregs of men,
And scrawl strange words with a barbarous pen,
And mingle among the jostling crowd,
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud."

He wanted to live in Boston, where he could find more congenial associates; but his father advised against the move—there were, he said, too many lawyers in Boston already. Poetry

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was not likely to provide a means of livelihood, for in five years the *Poems* brought him only \$14.92. In 1825 at the age of thirty-one Bryant finally broke away and settled in New York, where he spent the remainder of his long life. He became one of the editors of the *New York Review and Athenæum Magazine*. The magazine soon died, and for a short time Bryant was forced to turn to the law once more. Soon, however, he established a connection with the *New York Evening Post*, of which he was later editor and part-owner. The connection lasted over half a century, and Bryant became one of the great newspaper editors of the age. Partridge is perhaps the only critic who has stressed the importance of Bryant's newspaper work, which the lover of *belles-lettres* is inclined to slight:

"He was a much larger man and more significant than the critics have made him out to be. His active and many-sided life is very inadequately expressed in the slender volume of his verse, excellent as much of that is. The journalist and critic who for fifty years sat in judgment on matters political and economic as well as cultural, who reflected in the *Evening Post* a refinement of taste and dignity of character before unequaled in American journalism, was of service to America quite apart from his contribution to our incipient poetry. He was the father of nineteenth-century American journalism as well as the father of nineteenth-century American poetry."

In New York Bryant—the author of *The Embargo*—became a Democrat and a supporter of Andrew Jackson. The result was a mild sort of social ostracism on the part of the Whigs, who detested Democrats as plebeians and levelers. Says Parke Godwin, "Even the most charitable among them [the better classes in New York] found it difficult to understand how a gentleman of education and refinement, impelled by no craving for office or leadership, could take the side of the unwashed multitude, whose popular name of Locofocos was supposed to indicate their inflammatory character." Becoming a Republican in later years, Bryant was one of the first prominent Easterners to support Lincoln as a leader of the party. When Lincoln made his notable address at Cooper Union in February, 1860, Bryant presided; and Lincoln is said to have remarked that it was worth a journey from the West to the East to see such a man.

Bryant's removal to New York in 1825 seems to divide his life into two periods. He became less provincial, and he took a much wider interest in affairs of all kinds; but while he never ceased to write verse, most of his distinctive verse was written before 1840. "The poet Bryant," remarks Fred Lewis Pattee, "died at length in the city newspaper office." Again and again his old friend Dana wrote to urge him to give more of his time to poetry. Bryant wrote to Dana on October 2, 1833:

"After all, poetic wares are not for the market of the present day. Poetry may get printed in the newspapers, but no man makes money by it, for the simple reason that nobody cares a fig for it. The taste for it is something old-fashioned; the march of the age is in another direction; mankind are occupied with politics, railroads, and steamboats."

Again he wrote in reply to Dana's urging on February 27, 1837:

"I should be glad of an opportunity to attempt something in the way I like best, and am, perhaps, fittest for; but here I am a draught-horse, harnessed to a daily

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drag. I have so much to do with my legs and hoofs, struggling and pulling and kicking, that, if there is anything of the Pegasus in me, I am too much exhausted to use my wings."

Bryant's poetic faculty was declining at the time when Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, and Whittier were beginning, following Bryant's lead, to give America what is perhaps its finest poetry.

Among his later works are the addresses on Irving and Cooper, his translations of the *Iliad* (1870) and the *Odyssey* (1872), and a few poems—among them "A Life-time" and "The Flood of Years." He died on June 12, 1878.

Hawthorne, who saw Bryant in Italy in 1858, has left a striking description in his *Italian Note-Books*:

"... with a long white beard, such as a palmer might have worn as the growth of his long pilgrimages, a brow almost entirely bald, and what hair he had quite hoary; a forehead impending, yet not massive; dark, bushy eyebrows and keen eyes, without much softness in them; a dark and sallow complexion; a slender figure, bent a little with age, but at once alert and firm. . . . There was a weary look in his face, as if he were tired of seeing things and doing things, though with certainly enough still to see and do, if need were. . . . His manners and whole aspect are very particularly plain, though not affectedly so; but it seems as if in the decline of life, and the security of his position, he had put off whatever artificial polish he may heretofore have had, and resumed the simpler habits and deportment of his early New England breeding. Not but what you discover, nevertheless, that he is a man of refinement, who has seen the world, and is well aware of his own place in it."

"... He uttered neither passion nor poetry, but excellent good sense, and accurate information, on whatever subject transpired; a very pleasant man to associate with, but rather cold, I should imagine, if one should seek to touch his heart with one's own. He shook hands kindly all round, but not with any warmth of gripe, although the ease of his deportment had put us all on sociable terms with him."

The two-volume life of Bryant by Parke Godwin, his son-in-law, in the six volumes of *The Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant* (1883-1884), is a good, old-fashioned biography. There are later biographies by John Bigelow (1890) and W. A. Bradley (1905). See also Allan Nevins's sketch in *D.A.B.* and his *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism* (1922), which treats Bryant's editorial work. The best editions of the poems are Parke Godwin's, in *The Life and Works*, and that of H. C. Sturges (1903). Among the various articles on Bryant which Tremaine McDowell has published, see "Bryant and *The North American Review*," *American Literature*, I, 14-26 (March, 1929). See also his *William Cullen Bryant: Representative Selections* (1935), which contains an excellent introductory essay and a good bibliography. See also M. T. Herrick, "Rhetoric and Poetry in Bryant," *American Literature*, VII, 188-194 (May, 1935).

CRITICAL COMMENTS

I join with all my heart to honor this native, sincere, original, patriotic poet. I say original:

I have heard him charged with being of a certain school. I heard it with surprise, and asked, What school? for he never reminded me of Goldsmith, or Wordsworth, or Byron, or Moore. I found him always original—a true painter of the face of the country, and of the sentiment of his own people. When I read the verses of popular American and English poets, I often think that they appear to have gone into the art galleries and to have seen pictures of mountains, but this man to have seen mountains. With his stout staff he has climbed Greylock and the White Hills, and sung what he saw. He renders Berkshire to me in verse, with the sober coloring, too, to which nature cleaves, only now and then permitting herself the scarlet and gold of the prism. It is his proper praise that he first, and he only, made known to mankind our northern landscape—its summer splendor, its autumn russet, its winter lights and glooms. And he is original because he is sincere (Address of Ralph Waldo Emerson at the Century Club in New York on Bryant's seventieth birthday in 1864).

Bryant's fatal defect was this omnipresent self-control, this puritanic concealment of the deepest passions of the heart, this careful covering over of our spiritual chasms. He did not have the audacity, the frenzy of the great poet. His themes were homely, his ideas those of his generation. Instead of burning with the spark of nature's fire he warmed his hands by a comfortable hearthside or sat close to the smoky lamp of the scholar (Grant C. Knight, *American Literature and Culture*, 1932, p. 157).

THANATOPSIS

(1811? 1821; 1817, 1821)

The earlier version of "Thanatopsis" was published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817; the revised and enlarged version appeared in the *Poems* (1821). The title, which means a view of death (*θάνατος ὄψις*), was given the poem by the editors of the *Review*. See Carl Van Doren, "The Growth of 'Thanatopsis,'" *The Nation*, CI, 432 (October 7, 1915). Do the lines of the first version seem altogether fitting in the mouth of Nature, who is the spokesman in the later version? The philosophy of the poem is Stoic. Compare the following sentences from the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius:

"Act, speak, and think as one who knows that he can at any moment depart from life. . . .

"What, then, can be our guide? Philosophy alone. And this consists in keeping the divinity within us inviolate; superior to pleasures and pains; free from inconsiderateness in action, and insincerity and hypocrisy; independent of what others may do or leave undone; accepting cheerfully whatever befalls or is appointed, as coming from the same source as himself; and, above all, awaiting death with a serene mind, as the natural dissolution of the elements of which every animal is compounded.

"And if for the elements there is nothing terrible in the continual change from one form to another, why should one dread the transformation and dis-

solution of the whole? It is natural, and nothing natural can be evil."

The 1817 Version

- 5 ----- Yet a few days, and thee,
The all-beholding sun, shall see no more,
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in th' embrace of ocean shall exist
10 Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall
claim
Thy growth, to be resolv'd to earth again;
And, lost each human trace, surrend'ring up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
15 To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to th' insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy
20 mould.
Yet not to thy eternal resting place
Shalt thou retire alone—nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings
25 The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre.—The hills,
Rock-ribb'd and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;

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The venerable woods—the floods that move
 In majesty,—and the complaining brooks,
 That wind among the meads, and make them
 green,
 Are but the solemn decorations all,
 Of the great tomb of man.—The golden sun,
 The planets, all the infinite host of heaven
 Are glowing on the sad abodes of death,
 Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes
 That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
 Of morning—and the Borean desert pierce—
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
 That veil Oregon, where he hears no sound
 Save his own dashings—yet—the dead are there,
 And millions in those solitudes, since first
 The flight of years began, have laid them down
 In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.—
 So shalt thou rest—and what if thou shalt fall
 Unnoticed by the living—and no friend
 Take note of thy departure? Thousands more
 Will share thy destiny.—The tittering world
 Dance to the grave. The busy brood of care
 Plod on, and each one chases as before
 His favourite phantom.—Yet all these shall leave
 come
 And make their bed with thee!

The 1821 Version

To him who in the love of Nature holds
 Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
 A various language; for his gayer hours
 She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
 And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
 Into his darker musings, with a mild
 And healing sympathy, that steals away
 Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
 Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
 Over thy spirit, and sad images
 Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
 And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
 Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—
 Go forth, under the open sky, and list
 To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
 Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
 Comes a still voice.—Yet a few days, and thee
 The all-beholding sun shall see no more
 In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
 Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
 Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist

Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall
 claim
 Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
 And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
 5 Thine individual being, shalt thou go
 To mix forever with the elements,
 To be a brother to the insensible rock
 And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
 Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
 10 Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy
 mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
 Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
 15 Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
 With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
 The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
 Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
 All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
 20 Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
 Stretching in pensive quietness between;
 The venerable woods—rivers that move
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks
 That make the meadows green; and, poured
 round all,
 25 Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
 Are but the solemn decorations all
 Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
 The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
 30 Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
 Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes
 That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
 Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
 35 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
 Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there:
 And millions in those solitudes, since first
 The flight of years began, have laid them down
 40 In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
 So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
 In silence from the living, and no friend
 Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
 45 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
 Their mirth and their employments, and shall
 come
 50 And make their bed with thee. As the long train
 Of ages glide away, the sons of men,
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes

In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and
soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE ENTRANCE TO A WOOD

(1815; 1817)

Under the title, "A Fragment," this poem was printed in the same number of the *North American Review* as "Thanatopsis." The closing sentence was added in the first edition of Bryant's *Poems* (1821). Parke Godwin, Bryant's son-in-law and biographer, writes of this poem:

"Composed in a noble old forest that fronted his father's dwelling-house, it is an exquisite picture of the calm contentment he found in the woods. Every object—the green leaves, the thick roof, the mossy rocks, the cleft-born wind-flowers, the dancing insects, the squirrel with raised paws, the ponderous trunks, black roots, and sunken brooks—is painted with the minutest fidelity, and yet with an almost impassioned sympathy."

The poem reminds one of two groups of Wordsworth's poems (which Bryant had not yet read): "Poems on the Naming of Places" and "Inscriptions."

Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which
needs
No school of long experience, that the world
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood
And view the haunts of Nature. The calm shade
Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze
That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a
balm
To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing here
Of all that pained thee in the haunts of men,

And made thee loathe thy life. The primal curse
Fell, it is true, upon the unsinching earth,
But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these shades
Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick roof
Of green and stirring branches is alive
And musical with birds, that sing and sport
In wantonness of spirit; while below
The squirrel, with raised paws and form erect,
Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the shade
Try their thin wings and dance in the warm beam
That waked them into life. Even the green trees
Partake the deep contentment; as they bend
To the soft winds, the sun from the blue sky
Looks in and sheds a blessing on the scene.
Scarce less the cleft-born wild-flower seems to
enjoy

Existence, than the winged plunderer
That sucks its sweets. The mossy rocks themselves,
And the old and ponderous trunks of prostrate
trees

That lead from knoll to knoll a causey rude
Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark roots,
With all their earth upon them, twisting high,
Breathe fixed tranquillity. The rivulet
Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er its
bed

Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the rocks,
Seems, with continuous laughter, to rejoice
In its own being. Softly tread the marge,
Lest from her midway perch thou scare the wren
That dips her bill in water. The cool wind,
That stirs the stream in play, shall come to thee,
Like one that loves thee nor will let thee pass
Ungreeted, and shall give its light embrace.

TO A WATERFOWL

(1815; 1818)

This poem was written on December 15, 1815, at Plainfield, Mass. Bryant had gone there to make inquiries about beginning the practice of law there. To quote from Parke Godwin's biography:

"He felt, as he walked up the hills, very forlorn and desolate indeed, not knowing what was to become of him in the big world. . . . The sun had already set, leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies; and while he was looking upon the rosy splendor with rapt admiration, a solitary bird made wing along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance, ask-

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ing himself whither it had come and to what far home it was flying. When he went to the house where he was to stop for the night, his mind was still full of what he had seen and felt, and he wrote . . . 'The Waterfowl.' "

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain
flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

"OH FAIREST OF THE RURAL MAIDS"

(1820)

This poem, one of the few love poems that Bryant published, was addressed to a farmer's daughter, Miss Frances Fairchild, whom he married in 1821.

Oh fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye.

5

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

10

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

15

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.

20

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,
Are not more sinless than thy breast;
The holy peace, that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes, is there.

25

JUNE

(1825; 1826)

- 30 "Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles 'June.' . . . The rhythmical flow, here, is even voluptuous—nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty" (Poe, "The Poetic Principle").
- 40
- 45

I gazed upon the glorious sky
And the green mountains round,
And thought that when I came to lie
At rest within the ground,
'Twere pleasant, that in flowery June,
When brooks send up a cheerful tune,
And groves a joyous sound,

50

The sexton's hand, my grave to make,
The rich, green mountain-turf should break.¹

A cell within the frozen mould,
A coffin borne through sleet,
And icy clods above it rolled,
While fierce the tempests beat—
Away!—I will not think of these—
Blue be the sky and soft the breeze,
Earth green beneath the feet,
And be the damp mould gently pressed
Into my narrow place of rest.

There through the long, long summer hours,
The golden light should lie,
And thick young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife bee and humming-bird.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon
Come, from the village sent,
Or song of maids, beneath the moon
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothèd lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know that I no more should see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and songs, and light, and bloom
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear
The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene;
Whose part, in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is that his grave is green;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice.

¹ Bryant died in June, 1878.

THE EVENING WIND

(1829)

Spirit that breathest through my lattice, thou
5 That cool'st the twilight of the sultry day,
Gratefully flows thy freshness round my brow;
Thou hast been out upon the deep at play,
Riding all day the wild blue waves till now,
10 Roughening their crests, and scattering high
their spray,
And swelling the white sail. I welcome thee
To the scorched land, thou wanderer of the sea!

Nor I alone; a thousand bosoms round
15 Inhale thee in the fulness of delight;
And languid forms rise up, and pulses bound
Livelier, at coming of the wind of night;
And, languishing to hear thy grateful sound,
20 Lies the vast inland stretched beyond the sight.
Go forth into the gathering shade; go forth,
God's blessing breathed upon the fainting earth!

Go, rock the little wood-bird in his nest,
25 Curl the still waters, bright with stars, and
rouse
The wide old wood from his majestic rest,
Summoning from the innumerable boughs
The strange, deep harmonies that haunt his
breast:
30 Pleasant shall be thy way where meekly bows
The shutting flower, and darkling waters pass,
And where the o'ershadowing branches sweep
the grass.

35 The faint old man shall lean his silver head
To feel thee; thou shalt kiss the child asleep,
And dry the moistened curls that overspread
His temples, while his breathing grows more
deep;
40 And they who stand about the sick man's bed,
Shall joy to listen to thy distant sweep,
And softly part his curtains to allow
Thy visit, grateful to his burning brow.

45 Go—but the circle of eternal change,
Which is the life of Nature, shall restore,
With sounds and scents from all thy mighty
range,
Thee to thy birthplace of the deep once more;
50 Sweet odors in the sea-air, sweet and strange,
Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the shore;
And, listening to thy murmur, he shall deem
He hears the rustling leaf and running stream.

HYMN OF THE CITY

(1830)

Not in the solitude
Alone may man commune with Heaven, or see, 5
Only in savage wood
And sunny vale, the present Deity;
Or only hear his voice
Where the winds whisper and the waves rejoice.

Even here do I behold
Thy steps, Almighty!—here, amid the crowd
Through the great city rolled,
With everlasting murmur deep and loud—
Choking the ways that wind 10
'Mong the proud piles, the work of human
kind.

Thy golden sunshine comes
From the round heaven, and on their dwelling 20
lies
And lights their inner homes;
For them Thou fill'st with air the unbounded
skies,
And givest them the stores
Of ocean, and the harvest of its shores.

Thy Spirit is around,
Quickening the restless mass that sweeps along; 30
And this eternal sound—
Voices and footfalls of the numberless throng—
Like the resounding sea,
Or like the rainy tempest, speaks of Thee.

And when the hour of rest
Comes, like a calm upon the mid-sea brine,
Hushing its billowy breast—
The quiet of that moment too is thine;
It breathes of Him who keeps
The vast and helpless city while it sleeps.

THE PRAIRIES

(1832; 1833)

In 1832 Bryant visited his brothers in Illinois, where he may perhaps have seen Abraham Lincoln, at that time a militia captain in the Black Hawk War. The two prose passages given below are from his letters, the first to Richard Henry Dana, Sr., the second to his wife:

• 130 •

"I have seen the great West, where I ate corn bread and hominy, slept in log houses, with twenty men, women, and children in the same room. . . . At Jacksonville, where my two brothers live, I got on a horse, and travelled about a hundred miles to the northward over the immense prairies, with scattered settlements, on the edges of the groves. These prairies, of a soft, fertile garden soil, and a smooth, undulating surface, on which you may put a horse to full speed, covered with high, thinly growing grass, full of weeds and gaudy flowers, and destitute of bushes or trees, perpetually brought to my mind the idea of their having been once cultivated. They looked to me like the fields of a race which had passed away, whose enclosures and habitations had decayed, but on whose vast and rich plains, smoothed and levelled by tillage, the forest had not yet encroached."

"I believe this to be the most salubrious, and I am sure it is the most fertile, country I ever saw; at the same time I do not think it beautiful. Some of the views, however, from the highest parts of the prairies are what, I have no doubt, some would call beautiful in the highest degree, the green heights and hollows and plains blend so softly and gently with one another."

These are the gardens of the Desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name—
The Prairies. I beheld them for the first
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight
Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they stretch,
In airy undulations, far away,
35 As if the Ocean, in his gentlest swell,
Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
And motionless forever.—Motionless?—
No—they are all unchained again. The clouds
Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
40 The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on high,
45 Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not—ye have
played

Among the palms of Mexico and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountains of Sonora glide
50 Into the calm Pacific—have ye fanned
A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?
Man hath no part in all this glorious work:

The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown
their slopes

With herbage, planted them with island groves,
And hedged them round with forests. Fitting
floor

For this magnificent temple of the sky—
With flowers whose glory and whose multitude
Rival the constellations! The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,—
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above our Eastern hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my steed,
Among the high rank grass that sweeps his sides
The hollow beating of his footstep seems
A sacrilegious sound. I think of those
Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they here—
The dead of other days?—and did the dust
Of these fair solitudes once stir with life
And burn with passion? Let the mighty mounds
That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,
Answer. A race, that long has passed away,
Built them;—a disciplined and populous race
Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet the
Greek

Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon. These ample fields
Nourished their harvests, here their herds were
fed,

When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,
And bowed his manèd shoulder to the yoke.
All day this desert murmured with their toils,
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked, and
wooded

In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice. The red-man came—
The roaming hunter-tribes, warlike and fierce,
And the mound-builders vanished from the
earth.

The solitude of centuries untold
Has settled where they dwelt. The prairie-wolf
Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug den
Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the ground
Where stood their swarming cities. All is gone;
All—save the piles of earth that hold their bones,
The platforms where they worshipped unknown
gods,

The barriers which they builded from the soil

To keep the foe at bay—till o'er the walls
The wild beleaguers broke, and, one by one,
The strongholds of the plain were forced, and
heaped

5 With corpses. The brown vultures of the wood
Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,
And sat, unscared and silent, at their feast.
Haply some solitary fugitive,
Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense
10 Of desolation and of fear became
Bitterer than death, yielded himself to die.
Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind words
Welcomed and soothed him; the rude conquerors
Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose
15 A bride among their maidens, and at length
Seemed to forget—yet ne'er forgot—the wife
Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,
Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his race.

20 Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength,
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red-man, too,
Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,
25 And nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought
A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds
No longer by these streams, but far away,
On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave back
The white man's face—among Missouri's springs,
30 And pools whose issues swell the Oregon—
He rears his little Venice. In these plains
The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty leagues
Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,
Roams the majestic brute, in herds that shake
35 The earth with thundering steps—yet here I meet
His ancient footprints stamped beside the pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.
Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers
40 They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,
And birds, that scarce have learned the fear of
man,

Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,
Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer
45 Bounds to the wood at my approach. The bee,
A more adventurous colonist than man,
With whom he came across the eastern deep,
Fills the savannas with his murmurings,
And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,
50 Within the hollow oak. I listen long
To his domestic hum, and think I hear
The sound of that advancing multitude

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Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the
ground

Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark brown furrows. All at once
A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,
And I am in the wilderness alone.

THE ANTIQUITY OF FREEDOM

(1842)

Here are old trees, tall oaks, and gnarlèd pines,
That stream with gray-green mosses; here the
ground

Was never trenched by spade, and flowers spring
up

Unsown, and die ungathered. It is sweet
To linger here, among the flitting birds
And leaping squirrels, wandering brooks, and
winds

That shake the leaves, and scatter, as they pass,
A fragrance from the cedars, thickly set
With pale-blue berries. In these peaceful shades—
Peaceful, unpruned, immeasurably old—
My thoughts go up the long dim path of years,
Back to the earliest days of liberty.

O FREEDOM! thou art not, as poets dream,
A fair young girl, with light and delicate limbs,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailèd hand
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword; thy
brow,

Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred
With tokens of old wars; thy massive limbs
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee has
launched

His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee;
They could not quench the life thou hast from
heaven;

Merciless Power has dug thy dungeon deep,
And his swart armorers, by a thousand fires,
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems thee
bound,

The links are shivered, and the prison-walls
Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,

As springs the flame above a burning pile,
And shoutest to the nations, who return
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies.

5 Thy birthright was not given by human hands:
Thou wert twin-born with man. In pleasant
fields,

While yet our race was few, thou sat'st with him,
To tend the quiet flock and watch the stars,

10 And teach the reed to utter simple airs.
Thou by his side, amid the tangled wood,
Didst war upon the panther and the wolf,
His only foes; and thou with him didst draw
The earliest furrow on the mountain-side,

15 Soft with the deluge. Tyranny himself,
Thy enemy, although of reverend look,
Hoary with many years, and far obeyed,
Is later born than thou; and as he meets
The grave defiance of thine elder eye,

20 The usurper trembles in his fastnesses.

Thou shalt wax stronger with the lapse of
years,

But he shall fade into a feeblèr age—

25 Feebler, yet subtler. He shall weave his snares,
And spring them on thy careless steps, and clap
His withered hands, and from their ambush call
His hordes to fall upon thee. He shall send
Quaint maskers, wearing fair and gallant forms
30 To catch thy gaze, and uttering graceful words
To charm thy ear; while his sly imps, by stealth,
Twine round thee threads of steel, light thread
on thread,

That grow to fetters; or bind down thy arms
35 With chains concealed in chaplets. Oh! not yet
Mayst thou unbrace thy corslet, nor lay by
Thy sword; nor yet, O Freedom! close thy lids
In slumber; for thine enemy never sleeps,
And thou must watch and combat till the day
40 Of the new earth and heaven. But wouldst thou
rest

Awile from tumult and the frauds of men,
These old and friendly solitudes invite
Thy visit. They, while yet the forest-trees
45 Were young upon the unviolated earth,
And yet the moss-stains on the rock were new,
Beheld thy glorious childhood, and rejoiced.

50

IV

*AMERICAN
RENAISSANCE*

1830 - 1870

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

1830-1870

The dominant figure in the upper center is Abraham Lincoln, reading the Gettysburg Address as he stands on the "cornerstone" of the Union. Beneath and to the left are Walt Whitman, the Transcendentalists, and the Abolitionists. In the foreground stands Harriet Beecher Stowe. Behind her appear the faces of Bronson Alcott, Whittier, Longfellow, and Thoreau. Behind these are Horace Greeley, Frederick Douglass, and William Lloyd Garrison.

In the lower left-hand corner sits Emerson with Dr. Holmes just behind him. Above them is John Brown on the scaffold, and, above him, the figure evoked by "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." In the distance are a locomotive and wheels, representing the industrial revolution.

At the bottom are the three statesmen, Webster, Calhoun, and Clay. In the lower right-hand corner is Poe, with Lowell beside him and Henry Timrod just behind. Above is Nathaniel Hawthorne and, above him, Herman Melville on a ship's prow. In the distance the Capitol and the Washington Monument symbolize survival of the Union.

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

1830-1870

Literature becomes free institutions. . . . let us hope that, as it is our fortune to live in an age when we may behold a wonderful advancement of the country in all its other great interests, we may see also equal progress and success attend the cause of letters.

—DANIEL WEBSTER, "First Settlement of New England" (1820).

We used to believe them [Emerson and his New England contemporaries] heralds of the future; already we begin to perceive that they were rather chroniclers of times which shall be no more.

—BARRETT WENDELL, *A Literary History of America* (1900), p. 446.

The forty years extending from 1830 to 1870 saw the most remarkable development that had yet taken place in American literature. The promise of the preceding periods came at last to real fulfillment. The Romantic Movement, reaching its American climax after its English decline, gave us a literature comparable in quality and range to that of Victorian England; and much of it could have been written nowhere but in America. The most striking aspect of the period is the literary rise of New England, for this is the age of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, and a number of less important writers. The South is represented by Poe, Kennedy, Simms, Longstreet, Timrod, Hayne, and the humorists of the old Southwest. In the Middle Atlantic States we have the continued work of Irving, Cooper, and Bryant and, in addition, that of Melville.

I

The Era of Good Feeling, which had followed the War of 1812, was succeeded by a period of sectional hostility which culminated in the Civil War. The traditional antagonism between East and West was overshadowed by the increasing hostility between North and South. In reality, the sections had never been amalgamated into a nation. Leading statesmen—notably Henry Clay—fought against the strong sectional tendencies. Andrew Jackson, President from 1829 to 1837, was, like Calhoun, a Southerner; but his attitude during the Nullification crisis of 1832 was a thoroughly national one. In 1830, when excitement over the protective tariff was already running high, he gave at the Jefferson birthday dinner his famous toast: "The Federal Union—it must be preserved!" Calhoun's defiant reply—"The Union—next to our liberty, the most dear!"—aptly expressed the feelings of many Southerners.

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE-----1830-1870

Only in the twentieth century years have historians come to something like general agreement in regard to the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the long sectional conflict which preceded them. Southern historians have at last learned to study the period realistically instead of writing justifications of the Lost Cause, and Northern historians have ceased to believe in a gigantic Southern conspiracy to break up the Union. Professor S. E. Morison writes in *The Oxford History of the United States*: "One theory, invented by the abolitionists, made orthodox by the Republican party, and given literary currency by such men as James Russell Lowell, regards the American colonization of Texas, the Texan annexation to the United States, and the Mexican War, as the fruit of a gigantic conspiracy of Southern politicians to get 'Bigger pens to cram with slaves.'" In *The Rise of the Common Man*, the late Carl Russell Fish wrote with some exaggeration of ex-President John Quincy Adams: "In a devastating speech, lasting one hour a day for a month, he created the terrifying bogie of a slavocracy or Slave Power, sleepless and malevolent, which was to become one of the forces rallying the North to the antislavery banner in the fifties, and which, exploited by Von Holst, dominated the accepted view of American history for fifty years."

The fundamental reasons for the antagonism between South and North were economic. The one used slave labor; the other, free; the South was agricultural, the North at this time largely industrial. The South had in a sense always constituted a "conscious minority," jealous of its rights; and it became increasingly suspicious of the growing power of the central government. The rapid increase of the North in population and in wealth threatened the old balance of political power embodied in the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The rise of the radical Abolitionists—coming just after the Southampton slave insurrection—seemed a direct threat against the foundation of Southern economic life. New inventions, such as the cotton gin and the spinning jenny, had made slavery profitable again. Southern politicians finally threw over Jefferson's ideal as impractical and, for perhaps the first time, undertook to defend slavery on principle—at the very time when it had disappeared from the rest of the civilized world. A minority of Southern fire-eaters would not be satisfied with anything less than the right to take their slaves into any part of the Union. The two things which finally aroused the North and the Northwest were the fear of slavery in the northern territories and the stringent Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which prompted Emerson to write in his journal in July of the next year: "This filthy enactment was made in the nineteenth century, by people who could read and write. I will not obey it, by God." The Fugitive Slave Law was one of the influences which led Mrs. Stowe to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and Daniel Webster's defense of the law in his speech in support of the Compromise of 1850 caused Whittier to denounce him in "Ichabod."

Under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, who established the *Liberator* in 1831, the antislavery movement took on new vigor and bitterness. He denounced the federal Constitution, because it protected slavery, as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." From one point of view, the Abolitionists—notably Garrison, Whittier, and Wendell Phillips—seem comparable to the Hebrew prophets denouncing the enemies of righteousness; and they have often been so regarded. But present-day historians, who are far better economists, often view them as doctrinaires, ignorant of the realities against which they were fighting. What surprises the modern student is their almost total lack of first-hand knowledge of the slave economy. Mrs. Stowe had seen a slave plantation, but apparently Garrison, Phillips, and Whittier had not; and they were willing to believe anything they heard provided

it were to the discredit of slavery. James Truslow Adams writes in *America's Tragedy* (1934): "They made no allowance for their own error, no allowance for the historic process which had fastened slavery on the South, no allowance for the economic and social problems involved in emancipation, no allowance for the hundreds of thousands of honorable, kindly white masters who found themselves caught in the nexus of a type of civilization which the world was only suddenly beginning to denounce. As is the way of reforming zealots always, they struck out venomously at the morality of all who differed with them." But for the Abolitionists and the Southern fire-eaters, the Civil War might have been avoided, for—at least in the older Southern states—it was a moribund institution, and geographic conditions were such that slavery could never be profitable farther west than Texas or north of the Ohio.

The Civil War put an end to slavery, though not to the race problem, and it made the nation an economic unit such as it had never before been. After the South in the 'eighties and 'nineties became reconciled to the situation, the United States might at last be called, in the full sense of the word, a nation. During the period we are discussing, however, it was an aggregation of sections; and American literature was in considerable measure the sum of the various sectional literatures. The Civil War had other consequences. An important one was the increased respect of Europe for the nation which had survived the ordeal of internal war. The Civil War speeded up the process of industrializing the nation, and it left industrialism with no serious rival in South or West, for the South had been the chief critic of industrialism, and Appomattox left the nation without a real exponent of any other way of life.

II

The election to the Presidency in 1828 of Andrew Jackson of Tennessee marked the end of the Virginia-Massachusetts dynasty which had held that office since 1789. Jackson's predecessors had all been Eastern men of good family, and all of them after Washington had been college-bred. Jackson was a self-made man; and, although born on the line separating the two Carolinas, he had spent most of his life in the Southwest. He had practiced law in Tennessee, acquired property, distinguished himself in the Indian wars, and become a national hero by beating the veteran troops of Wellington at New Orleans. It is true that in Tennessee his political record had been like that of other large landholders, but that circumstance did not interfere with his being elected as the champion of the common people.

His predecessor, John Quincy Adams, would not even attend the inaugural ceremonies. Cultivated men and women, noting the swarms of common people in the White House, upsetting the punchbowls, breaking glasses, and standing with muddy feet on fine damask chairs, felt that, as Justice Story put it, "The reign of King Mob seemed triumphant." One lady was reminded of how Paris mobs had behaved in the royal palaces during the French Revolution. Daniel Webster thought the crowds behaved as though they felt "the country is rescued from some dreadful danger." Even after Jackson had been in the White House for five years, Emerson wrote to Carlyle: "A most unfit person in the Presidency has been doing the worst things; the worse he grew, the more popular."

Jackson's election marked a revival, with a difference, of Jeffersonian democracy. He had been the candidate of what might with some exaggeration be called a farmer-labor party. It was made up in large part of Southern and Western farmers and of Eastern workmen, who were just beginning to organize. The actual issues, about which the voters were not

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very clear, were, as in many later elections, primarily economic rather than political. The rapid rise of industrialism in the Northeast had lowered the economic and social status of workers and given them a feeling of insecurity. A high protective tariff had benefited Eastern traders and manufacturers, but it had borne hard upon Southern and Western farmers. Men were coming to feel that the government was helping to build up a plutocracy, an aristocracy of capital which was fast superseding the old aristocracy of landholders. Control of big business had become a political issue. Jackson and his followers hated in particular the Bank of the United States, which under the management of the arrogant Nicholas Biddle seemed a threat to the welfare of the people. In a Farewell Address issued shortly before his retirement in 1837 Jackson wrote:

"The agricultural, the mechanical, and the laboring classes, have little or no share in the direction of the great moneyed corporations; and from their habits and the nature of their pursuits, they are incapable of forming extensive combinations to act together with unified force. . . . Yet these classes of society form the great body of the people of the United States; they are the bone and sinew of the country; men who love liberty and desire nothing but equal rights and equal laws, and who, moreover, hold the great mass of our national wealth, although it is distributed in moderate amounts among the millions of freemen who possess it. But, with overwhelming numbers and wealth on their side, they are in constant danger of losing their fair influence in the Government, and with difficulty maintain their just rights against the incessant efforts daily made to encroach upon them. The mischief springs from the power which the moneyed interest derives from a paper currency, which they are able to control; from the multitude of corporations, with exclusive privileges, which they have succeeded in obtaining in the different States, and which are employed altogether for their benefit; and unless you become more watchful in your States, and check this spirit of monopoly and thirst for exclusive privileges, you will, in the end, find that the most important powers of Government have been given or bartered away, and the control over your dearest interests has passed into the hands of these corporations."

The Jackson party abolished the Bank, but it did little to remedy the abuses of the new industrial order, and it extended the spoils system to an alarming degree. Among its achievements was the gradual extension, in the South as well as in the North and the West, of the right to vote to many who had not had that protection. The movement produced no great philosophical writer, like John Locke, and no great economist, like Adam Smith, to organize and put into memorable form its fundamental ideas.

The relation of the Jackson movement to literature is somewhat unusual. Among writers in sympathy with it were Bryant, Cooper, Hawthorne, Whitman, Seba Smith, and George Bancroft the historian. In the *Democratic Review*, edited by John L. O'Sullivan, the movement had an organ which published some of the writings of Bryant, Hawthorne, Whittier, Thoreau, Simms, and Whitman. Hawthorne was an admirer of Jackson and hardly the lukewarm Democrat that many have supposed. Cooper, much as he disliked a certain leveling tendency in American social life, in the main held to Jacksonian principles. As a landed proprietor, he had little use for the new plutocracy of big business. Walt Whitman attempted to create an American poetry which should be in part the logical expression of the Jacksonian ideal. Poe and Thoreau were each too much the individualist to care for the doctrines of any

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party. Emerson's attitude was somewhat equivocal. In his essay on "Politics" he wrote: "Of the two great parties which at this hour almost share the nation between them, I should say that one has the best cause, and the other contains the best men." Emerson chose rather to align himself with the well-to-do Boston businessmen rather than with the common people whom Whitman loved. Nevertheless he saw some hope that "this rank rabble party, the Jacksonism of the country, heedless of English and of all literature . . . may root out the hollow dilettantism of our cultivation," which seemed to him so heavily dependent upon England. The Transcendentalists were intensely individualistic, and so Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, and others had little use for either party. And yet the opinions they expressed often showed a sympathy with Jacksonian doctrines.

III

"It was America's awkward age," says S. E. Morison. "The rather attractive child who had left his parents' roof, the marvellous boy who had proclaimed great truths (or perhaps delusions) to a candid world, was now a gawky hobbledohoy." James Truslow Adams, who is also struck by "the youthfulness of the whole period," points out, in his *New England in the Republic*, that the period is not "America's maturity nor even its coming of age, but its adolescence—the sudden discovery of romance, of culture, of altruism, of optimism, of self-reliance, and the sense of one's own individuality." In a time of pessimism and self-criticism like that of today, it is difficult for us to sympathize with the complacent optimism of the mid-nineteenth century. Apart from slavery, there was little dissatisfaction with American institutions, whether those institutions were economic, social, political, or religious. Victorian England was becoming disillusioned, but America still cherished the Romantic belief in the perfectibility of man.

In their Editors' Foreword to Fish's *Rise of the Common Man*, Dixon Ryan Fox and Arthur M. Schlesinger write of the years 1830-1850:

"The cultural heritage of the American people during these years was essentially an aristocratic one; even the efforts of the preceding generation for cultural independence had affected little the life of the masses. In the eyes of the new generation it was quite as important to abolish special privileges respecting cultural property as those in respect to physical possessions. . . . For the first time in history a people faced the problem—today ever with us—of whether the finer fruits of civilization can be democratized without being vulgarized."

In this time of increased opportunities for the middle and lower classes there was a considerable widening of the reading public, but along with it went a rapid vulgarization of manners and perhaps a decline in morals. The vulgarity of American life impressed British travelers like Dickens and Mrs. Trollope. The old aristocracy was declining in the North as well as in the South, and its place was gradually being usurped by a plutocracy which cared little for birth, breeding, culture, art, or manners. The tendency was to value everything in terms of money. The decline in taste is less evident in literature than in furniture, architecture, dress, and manners. After all deductions are made, there is some compensation in the fact that culture was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the few.

From this period down to our own time foreign and native critics have noted the feminization of American education, culture, and literature. "Feminine control [of society] at that time," says Carl Russell Fish, "meant a more than Victorian censorship of art, literature and

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the stage. It created an atmosphere that welcomed poetry and tragedy, but did not encourage humor." Hawthorne complained of "the damned mob of scribbling women." In *The Genteel Female* (1931), Clifton J. Furness writes:

"This difference between our indigenous writings and the literature of other nations is partially accounted for by the circumstance that the greater part of our literary output has been created and conditioned principally by a feminine reading public, whereas the greater part of the rest of the world's literature has been moulded chiefly by and for men.

"Our American voice has from the beginning bordered upon a feminine falsetto. Even when an occasional virile bass sounds from the throat of a Whitman or a Sandburg, the inevitable soprano of the female is heard ringing through it, as undertone or overtone. . . . In the arts, in literature, in music, America is the woman's land."

IV

In his chapter on "Book Publishers and Publishing" in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Earl L. Bradsher writes: ". . . the great outstanding factor in the history of our publishing in the nineteenth century is the absence of and the struggle for an international copyright law. Much of the development of the short story in America, the rise to commanding position of the American magazine, the stifling of the American playwright for three quarters of a century, and the desperate struggle of all save our greatest novelists against grave difficulties until 1891 may be traced to the want of such a law." In 1841 Emerson wrote to Carlyle that a certain New York "corsair" had brought out a pirated edition of *Heroes and Hero-Worship* and driven the authorized American publisher from the market. "Not only have these men made a book," he adds, ". . . but the New York newspapers print the book in chapters, and you circulate for six cents per newspaper at the corners of all streets in New York and Boston; gaining in fame what you lose in coin." Not all the publishers were pirates, however. Harper and Brothers paid Thackeray £400 for *The Virginians* and Dickens £1,250 for *Great Expectations*. Some of the publishers were active in trying to secure the passage of an international copyright law, which, however, was not accomplished until 1891. Meanwhile popular American authors, like Cooper and Longfellow, suffered from British and Canadian pirates. During this period the number of books by American authors published in this country rapidly increased. Some figures are given by the publisher, Samuel G. Goodrich ("Peter Parley"), in his *Recollections of a Lifetime*. Of the books printed in America in 1820, Goodrich calculates that seventy per cent were by British authors. By 1830 books written by Americans amounted to forty per cent of the total, and in 1856 to seventy per cent.

It is difficult to obtain full and reliable information on the financial returns received by authors for books and magazine articles. Bradsher states that the total income from Emerson's literary labors has been estimated at a little more than thirty thousand dollars. Fitz-Greene Halleck, a popular Knickerbocker poet is said to have earned \$17,500—or about a dollar a day on the average. In a letter to Thomas Hughes in 1887, Lowell referred to "my general copyrights, for which I am paid £400 a year. Not much after nearly fifty years of authorship," he adds, "but enough to keep me from the almshouse." The best-paid of the magazinists was N. P. Willis, who in the early 'forties was making about \$4800 a year.

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F. L. Mott calculates that in the year 1843 Poe's contributions to magazines brought him only about three hundred dollars. *Graham's Magazine* and *Godey's Lady's Book* were the best-paying magazines of the time. Poe received from Graham four or five dollars a page, while Willis was paid more than twice as much. In 1851 George Henry Boker wrote to Richard Henry Stoddard: "Alas! Dick, is it not sad that an American author cannot live by magazine writing?" In this period, as in the preceding one, few authors were able to support themselves by their pens. Melville finally gave up the struggle and took a place in the New York Customs House. Poe was a magazinist to the end of his life, but he and his family nearly starved on what he earned. Emerson and other New England authors resorted to the lecture lyceum to supplement their income from books and magazine articles. Even Longfellow, the most popular poet of the time, did not give up teaching until 1854. He got only fifteen dollars for "The Village Blacksmith" in 1840 or 1841, but his rate of pay increased rapidly. "Morturi Salutamus" brought him a thousand dollars, and "The Hanging of the Crane" three thousand.

The rise of the annuals and gift-books made authorship somewhat more profitable than it had been in the preceding period. These were handsomely bound and illustrated miscellanies containing stories, essays, and poems and designed chiefly for women readers. The fashion had spread from Germany to England and thence to America. Around the middle of the century they are said to have averaged about sixty a year. They were often juvenile and sentimental, but they published some of the best work of Poe and Hawthorne. One of the best of them was the *Token*, published by Goodrich in Boston and notable for the number of Hawthorne's tales which first appeared in it.

"In the years immediately following 1825," says F. L. Mott in *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850*, "there was an extraordinary outburst of magazine activity which paralleled the expansion in many other lines of development; . . ." By 1850 there were six times as many American magazines as there had been in 1825. The rise of the magazines brought new opportunities for American authors in spite of the fact that most magazines paid their contributors little or nothing. The American magazine ceased to model itself upon the British quarterlies and became a thoroughly national institution. Most Americans derived their culture from magazines rather than from books. There were many magazines designed for women. The most notable of these was *Godey's Lady's Book*, founded in 1830 and ably edited for many years by Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale, who was also the author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." One of the most influential magazines of the 'forties was *Graham's Magazine* which published some of Poe's best work. The two magazines mentioned above were both published in Philadelphia, but no city had such a monopoly of magazines as New York came to have in the latter part of the century. The best of the Southern magazines were the *Southern Literary Messenger* (1834-1864), once edited by Poe, and the *Southern Quarterly Review* (1842-1857), which Simms edited for five or six years. Of the numerous magazines founded in the West, we mention only the *Western Messenger* (1835-1841), published in Cincinnati and Louisville. Under the leadership of transplanted New Englanders, the *Messenger* became practically a Transcendentalist organ, a forerunner of the *Dial*. Among the more notable New York magazines were the *Knickerbocker Magazine* (1833-1865) and the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art* (1847-1852)—later *Sartain's Union Magazine*—edited for a time by Carolina Matilda Kirkland, author of *A New Home—Who'll Follow?* Besides the *North American Review*, founded in

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1815, New England had two important periodicals. The earliest of these was the *Dial* (1840-1844), edited first by Margaret Fuller and later by Emerson. Although the circulation of this Transcendentalist organ never reached three hundred, it has received more attention from our literary historians than other periodicals because it published much significant writing by Emerson, Thoreau, and other Transcendentalists. With the founding in 1857 of the *Atlantic Monthly* under the editorship of James Russell Lowell, the New England group found at last a suitable literary medium for their best work. Every student who has the opportunity should examine the early volumes of this magazine and of as many others as he can. In no other way can he better learn to understand the literary tastes of the period.

V

As we look back to the middle of the nineteenth century, Boston seems our most important literary center. It was not by any means, however, the only one, and New York and Philadelphia published more books than Boston. New York was already aspiring to be the literary capital. Horace Greeley wrote in 1839: "New York has become the metropolis, in our country, not only of commerce, but of literature and the arts." New York had numerous minor writers—many of them discussed in Poe's "The Literati"—but nearly all of them have been forgotten except Melville and Whitman and two writers who belong primarily to an earlier period: Irving and Bryant.

There was no little literary activity in the Middle West in this period, but not until after the Civil War did the West produce anything that can be said really to survive. Professor R. L. Rusk's *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier* is a mine of information for those interested in the literary product of that section before 1840. If we set aside Poe, Melville, and Whitman, the major writers of this period are all New Englanders. For that reason, we shall give to that section what might otherwise seem entirely too much space.

Our literary history received almost no attention from scholars until after 1870. There were, however, anthologists of some ability. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, ex-clergyman, magazineist, editor of Poe's works, brought out *The Poets and Poetry of America* (1842 and several later editions), *The Prose Writers of America* (1847), and *The Female Poets of America* (1848). Oliver Wendell Holmes once remarked: "What a curious creature Griswold is! He seems to me a kind of naturalist whose subjects are authors, whose memory is a perfect fauna of all flying, running, and creeping things that feed on ink." Poe accused Griswold of giving too much space to New England and not enough to the South and the West. Somewhat more useful than the Griswold anthologies is the two-volume *Cyclopædia of American Literature* (1855), edited by two New York literati, Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck.

VI

The period which we have called American Renaissance might more accurately have been described as The Ascendancy of Seaboard Massachusetts. Of the important New England writers, only Longfellow was born outside the state, and all of them lived in Boston or in Cambridge or Concord near by. In the years 1803-1819 New England gave birth to a group of writers who are comparable to the Virginia statesmen of the Revolutionary period. It seems worth while to attempt here to reconstruct briefly the background in which these men lived and wrote. They seem so remote from our America of the twentieth century that it is not always easy for the casual reader to convince himself that they ever actually lived. They are victims of the "Victorian" legend.

"... the highest development of intellectual life in New England," says Barrett Wendell, "coincided with its greatest material prosperity." Seaboard Massachusetts in the mid-nineteenth century had the wealth and leisure upon which the production and consumption of literature are almost necessarily based. One is likely to forget this important fact because the New England writers had little to say of the industrial régime that had sprung up all around them. The Romantic literary attitude was still well expressed in William Cowper's line: "God made the country and man made the town."

Boston was wealthy, and yet, Dickens assures us, its devotion to the dollar was less than that of other American cities. There is an abundance of testimony to the extraordinary regard in which men of letters were held in Boston and Cambridge. Samuel G. Goodrich, who published the "Peter Parley" textbooks, wrote: "Society was strongly impressed with literary tastes; genius was respected and cherished: a man, in those days, who had achieved a literary fame, was at least equal to a president of a bank, or a treasurer of a manufacturing company." After moving from New York to Boston, Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote back to Bayard Taylor: "The humblest man of letters here has a position which he doesn't have in New York. To be known as an able writer is to have the choicest society opened to you. A knight of the quill here is supposed necessarily a gentleman. In New York—he's a Bohemian! Outside of his personal friends he has no standing." Another outsider, William Dean Howells, writes: "I arrived in Boston when all talents had more or less a literary coloring, and when the great talents were literary." Howells adds: "Literature in Boston, indeed, was so respectable, and often of so high a lineage, that to be a poet was not only to be good society, but almost to be good family." And Boston was quite as aristocratic as Philadelphia or perhaps even Charleston. The author of "The Man Without a Country," Edward Everett Hale, in his *James Russell Lowell and His Friends* contrasts modern college students with those whom he and Lowell had known at Harvard: "Let it be remembered, then, that the whole drift of fashion, occupation, and habit among the undergraduates ran in lines suggested by literature. Athletics and sociology are, I suppose, now the fashion at Cambridge. But literature was the fashion then." It is small wonder that poets came out of such an atmosphere. In Massachusetts even the politicians were often literary—notably Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Edward Everett, George Bancroft, and Charles Sumner. In other sections comparatively few of the ablest young men were attracted to literature as a career.

Boston publishers had a keen interest in the literary quality of their wares. James T. Fields was one of the most remarkable publishers the world has ever seen. He was a writer, a literary patron, an editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and a friend of important authors on two continents. His second wife, Mrs. Annie Fields, was also a writer. Out of her journals and letters M. A. DeWolfe Howe has compiled a book—*Memories of a Hostess*—which contains vivid glimpses of most of the New England writers. It was her husband that persuaded Hawthorne to expand a tale into *The Scarlet Letter* and so converted a writer of short stories into a fairly popular novelist. Of the publishing house of Ticknor and Fields, Howells remarks with a touch of exaggeration: "Ticknor and Fields . . . were literary publishers in a sense such as the business world has known nowhere else before or since. Their imprint was a warrant of quality to the reader, and of immortality to the author." Thomas Bailey Aldrich, himself in later years an editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, tells the story that as an unknown young poet he went to Fields's office to submit a poem intended for that magazine. Fields

was out, and Aldrich waited in the editor's office until he was tired. Then he glanced at a memorandum book lying open on Fields's desk and noticed such entries as these: "Don't forget to mail E——his contract," "Don't forget H——'s proofs," etc. Below this long list of "don't forgets" Aldrich wrote: "Don't forget to accept A——'s poem," and then left. Fields, one likes to remember, accepted the poem, sent the young poet a check for it, and never published it.

In size and population Cambridge and Concord were only villages. Even Boston would not now be reckoned a large city. It was of course a provincial place—what American city of those days was not? Holmes wrote in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* the often misquoted passage: "Boston State-house is the Hub of the Solar System. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar." There were, it has frequently been said, only eastern windows in the houses of the Boston Brahmins. Boston cared little for what was written south or west of New York; and of New York Lowell wrote in 1857: "I said something about this city being like Paris—or rather *not* like it. I have got the phrase I wanted now—it is *plaster* of Paris—a bad cast of a Bernini original."

There was, however, a redeeming side to Boston's provincialism, for had Boston been like other American cities American literature would have been less rich than it is. In Boston conservative business men were often hostile to the antislavery movement and Transcendentalism, but the city was more hospitable to ideas than other cities. "There was not an 'ism' but had its shrine, nor a cause but had its prophet," says Edward Everett Hale; and, again: "I despair of making any person appreciate the ferment in which any young person moved who came into the daily life of Boston in the days when Lowell left college. I have tried more than once, and without the slightest success."

Until after the middle of the century New England, like Virginia and South Carolina, had the sentiments of a separate nation. It was hardly more an integral part of the nation than the South had been before 1830. "When I was beginning life," wrote Lowell after the Civil War, "we had no national unity, and the only kind of unity we had was in New England but it was a provincial kind." In *Old Cambridge* Lowell's friend, Colonel T. W. Higginson, wrote: "The reader of to-day forgets that in the same years in which South Carolina was defying the North, Massachusetts gave directions that the national flag should not float over her State House." And when the Southern states began to secede from the Union, Hawthorne wrote that New England was as large a lump of earth as he could cherish an affection for.

Concord and Cambridge were not untypical of the New England villages where Emerson lectured and where lived many readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review*. In the chapter on Lowell in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, the late Ashley H. Thorndike wrote:

" . . . full justice has scarcely been done to the individuality and distinction of the New England village of the mid-nineteenth century. Cambridge was one of the best representatives of the type but there were many of them. Each was likely to have a college, or at least an academy, one orthodox and one Unitarian church, a few pleasant colonial houses, and many elms. Everybody who lived in the village had been born there, was proud of that accident, loved whatever natural beauty its trees and meadows afforded, and enjoyed a conscious satis-

faction that it was not like other places. Among the residents there might be a great personage, or even a poet, and there were certain to be enough teachers, ministers, doctors, judges, and writers to make up a coterie where ideas circulated. During the long winters, in fact, every one did considerable reading and thinking."

What distinguished Cambridge from other villages was that it was the seat of Harvard College, where Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell taught for many years. Cambridge, says Colonel Higginson, was "like other college towns in America, . . . a place of simple habits, where wealth counted for little and intellect for a great deal." Many of its residents had been educated at Harvard, traveled in Europe, and written books. Growing up in literary families, children took to writing with perfect naturalness because their parents and friends were also writing. In 1900 Howells, then living in New York, wrote of Cambridge: "I do not believe that since the capitalistic era began there was ever a community in which money counted for less. . . . A mind cultivated in some sort was essential. . . . To my mind, the structure of society was almost ideal." Howells, however, was idealizing the home of his earlier years. While living in Cambridge, he had written to Henry James on June 26, 1869: "I should think there was less intellectual vulgarity here—the worst sort, by the way—than anywhere else in the world. And yet it's a hard place to live in, expensive, inconvenient, and at times quite desolate."

In the social sense Boston was not democratic—except by comparison with cities of the Old World. If we disregard Whittier and Thoreau, the important New England writers belonged to old and established families. "Boston's aristocracy," said Charles Follen, who taught German at Harvard, "is chiefly of talent, wealth, moral habits, good manners and courtesy." One notes in Lowell, Emerson, and especially Holmes a certain patrician bias. Note Holmes's discussion of the self-made man in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, and see also Chapter I of his *Elsie Venner*, "The Brahmin Caste of New England." Literature was still felt to be largely a matter belonging to the cultivated classes. One feels a marked difference as one passes from the New England writers to Walt Whitman and Mark Twain—two writers for whom cultivated Boston did not greatly care. Nor did Boston react favorably to Poe, who was regarded as a Bohemian and who referred to Boston as "the Frogpond."

It is to be remembered that three of the Cambridge poets were also teachers at Harvard: Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell. They, like most other New England writers, often lectured on literary subjects. In those days the lecture lyceum was an important institution. Emerson and Lowell lectured as far west as Wisconsin, and Margaret Fuller gave erudite "conversations" to Boston women. Eager listeners to these lectures were many intelligent, well-read women—Theodore Parker's "glorious phalanx of old maids." Much of the prose of the New England writers was reworked from lectures to lyceum or college audiences. It is no wonder if some of it has for the modern reader an academic flavor.

VII

In September, 1836, while Harvard College was celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of its founding, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott, Convers Francis, James

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Freeman Clarke, Frederic Henry Hedge, and George Ripley met at Ripley's house to discuss "the state of current opinion in theology and philosophy," which they agreed was thoroughly unsatisfactory. This was the beginning of the Transcendental Club, which met informally for several years. Hedge was the only one of the group who then had any firsthand acquaintance with German Transcendental philosophy. "What we strongly felt," he wrote many years later, "was dissatisfaction with the reigning sensuous philosophy, dating from Locke, on which our Unitarian theology was based." The writings of Coleridge and Carlyle—through whom Americans became acquainted with German philosophy and literature—had, he wrote, "created a ferment in the minds of some of the young clergy of that day. There was a promise in the air of a new era of intellectual life." The movement was primarily religious and philosophical rather than literary although for us today its chief importance lies in its influence upon the writings of Emerson and Thoreau. It flourished only where Unitarianism had prepared the way. Non-Unitarians rarely had any comprehension of what it was all about.

Among those who at one time or another attended meetings of the Transcendental Club were Dr. William Ellery Channing, the great Unitarian divine; his nephew and biographer, William Henry Channing; Orestes Brownson, who eventually became a Roman Catholic; Theodore Parker, the great preacher of Transcendental doctrines; Margaret Fuller; John Sullivan Dwight; Ephraim Peabody; W. H. Furness; Charles T. Follen; Christopher Pearse Cranch; Elizabeth Peabody and her sister Sophia, who married Nathaniel Hawthorne. Thoreau, Jones Very, and Hawthorne attended occasionally. A younger group of Transcendentalists included Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the friend of Emily Dickinson; Samuel Longfellow, younger brother and biographer of the poet; Moncure Daniel Conway, a Virginian; and O. B. Frothingham, who lived to write *Transcendentalism in New England* (1876). The *Dial* (1840-1844), edited first by Margaret Fuller and later by Emerson, was in a sense a Transcendental organ; and the Brook Farm was an attempt to put Transcendental ideas into practice.

The majority of New England writers were not Transcendentalists. Most of them came to admire Emerson, but Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, Parkman, and Whittier were not members of the group and did not always view its activities sympathetically. On the other hand, it should be remembered that something akin to Transcendentalism is to be found in the writings of Poe, Melville, and Whitman, none of whom belonged to the New England group. Poe was definitely hostile, and Melville had little enthusiasm even for Emerson. Whitman once publicly acknowledged Emerson as his master, but his Transcendentalism is not derived exclusively from the New England writer.

The spirit of a movement is likely to escape when the historian tries to imprison it in a formula. We shall try here to suggest what the movement meant to the Transcendentalists and to their contemporaries. The general background is suggested by the opening paragraph in Lowell's essay, "Thoreau" (1865):

"What contemporary . . . will ever forget what was somewhat vaguely called the 'Transcendental Movement' of thirty years ago? Apparently set astir by Carlyle's essays on the Signs of the Times, and on History, the final and more immediate impulse seemed to be given by *Sartor Resartus*. At least the republication in Boston of that wonderful Abraham à Sancta Clara sermon on Falstaff's text of the miserable forked radish gave the signal for a sudden mental and moral

mutiny. *Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile!* was shouted on all hands with every variety of emphasis, and by voices of every conceivable pitch, representing the three sexes of men, women, and Mary Wortley Montagues. The nameless eagle of the tree Ygdrasil was about to sit at last, and wild-eyed enthusiasts rushed from all sides, each eager to thrust under the mystic bird that chalk egg from which the new and fairer Creation was to be hatched in due time. *Redeunt Saturnia regna*,—so far was certain, though in what shape, or by what methods, was still a matter of debate. Every possible form of intellectual and physical dyspepsia brought forth its gospel. Bran had its prophets, and the pre-sartorial simplicity of Adam its martyrs, tailored impromptu from the tar-pot by incensed neighbors, and sent forth to illustrate the 'feathered Mercury,' as defined by Webster and Worcester. Plainness of speech was carried to a pitch that would have taken away the breath of George Fox; and even swearing had its evangelists, who answered a simple inquiry after their health with an elaborate ingenuity of imprecation that might have been honorably mentioned by Marlborough in general orders. Everybody had a mission (with a capital M) to attend to everybody else's business. No brain but had its private maggot, which must have found pitifully short commons sometimes. Not a few impecunious zealots abjured the use of money (unless earned by other people), professing to live on the internal revenues of the spirit. Some had an assurance of instant millennium so soon as hooks and eyes should be substituted for buttons. Communities were established where everything was to be common but common sense. Men renounced their old gods, and hesitated only whether to bestow their furloughed allegiance on Thor or Budh. Conventions were held for every hitherto inconceivable purpose. The belated gift of tongues, as among the Fifth Monarchy men, spread like a contagion, rendering its victims incomprehensible to all Christian men; whether equally so to the most distant possible heathen or not was unexperimented, though many would have subscribed liberally that a fair trial might be made. It was the pentecost of Shinar Many foreign revolutionists out of work added to the general misunderstanding their contribution of broken English in every most ingenious form of fracture. All stood ready at a moment's notice to reform everything but themselves

"Nature is always kind enough to give even her clouds a humorous lining. I have barely hinted at the comic side of the affair, for the material was endless. This was the whistle and trailing fuse of the shell, but there was a very solid and serious kernel, full of the most deadly explosiveness. . . ."

The lunatic fringe of Transcendentalism seems to have amused Lowell; the conservative Hawthorne was bored by it. Of the many visitors who came to Concord to see Emerson he wrote: "Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of queer, strangely-dressed, oddly-behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense water." In "The Celestial Railroad" Hawthorne included a brief satiric passage which must have pleased the orthodox in inland New England. In this modernization of *The Pilgrim's Progress* he substituted for Christian's old antagonists, Pope and Pagan, a new enemy:

"These vile old troglodytes are no longer there [in the Valley of the Shadow of Death]; but into their deserted cave another terrible giant has thrust himself, and makes it his business to seize upon honest travellers and fatten them for his table with plentiful meals of smoke, mist, moonshine, raw potatoes, and sawdust. He is a German by birth, and is called Giant Transcendentalist; but as to his

form, his features, his substance, and his nature generally, it is the chief peculiarity of this huge miscreant that neither he for himself, nor anybody for him, has ever been able to describe them. As we rushed by the cavern's mouth we caught a hasty glimpse of him, looking somewhat like an ill-proportioned figure, but considerably more like a heap of fog and duskiness. He shouted after us, but in so strange a phraseology that we knew not what he meant, nor whether to be encouraged or affrighted."

When Charles Dickens inquired in Boston the meaning of Transcendentalism, he was told that "whatever was unintelligible would be certainly transcendental." Even Horace Mann the educator, who married Mary Peabody, whose two sisters were Transcendentalists, once replied to a lady who asked him how he liked Emerson: "Madam, a Scotch mist is perfect sunshine to him." If the language of the Transcendentalists offered difficulties to their contemporaries, it is even more likely to trouble the modern reader. In particular, one needs to bear in mind the distinction which the Transcendentalists, in common with Coleridge, Carlyle and the German philosophers, made between the Reason and the Understanding. "Reason," Emerson wrote to his brother Edward on May 31, 1834, "is the highest faculty of the soul, what we often mean by the soul itself: it never *reasons*, never proves; it simply perceives, it is vision. The Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues; near-sighted but strong-sighted, dwelling in the present, the expedient, the customary." Reason suggests the mystic's insight or intuition, the Quaker's Inner Light; Understanding, the ability to deal with practical affairs on a lower plane. The Idealist relies on Reason; the Materialist, on the Understanding.

It is time to turn to more sympathetic interpreters of Transcendentalism than Lowell and Hawthorne. In February, 1840, young Christopher Pearse Cranch, later a well-known poet and painter, then a student of theology at Harvard, wrote to a friend: "Emerson is to me the master mind of New England." He added: "New England is the place of places for all sorts of views. Things new and old are brought to light, and have their advocates and believers, and deniers. . . . In fact this Boston is a very Athens." On July 11 of the same year he wrote to his father, who had heard rumors that young Cranch was being led astray by German speculative thought. The son wrote that he knew little about the philosophy of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling which had struck him as "a cold, barren system of Idealism, not calculated to strengthen the soul's faith in the external realities of the spiritual world, or enable it as a perfect philosophy should, to give a reason for the hope that is in us. . . ." He thought more highly of the French eclectic philosopher, Victor Cousin, who, he said, "expressly contends for a religious element in the soul; a faculty breathed into us by God himself, whereby we become surer of the existence of such great truths than of anything else." Cranch continued:

"But somehow the name 'Transcendentalist' has become a nickname here for all who have broken away from the material philosophy of Locke, and the old theology of many of the early Unitarians, and who yearn for something more satisfying to the soul. It has become almost a synonym for one who, in whatever way, preaches the spirit rather than the letter.

"The name has been more particularly applied to Mr. Emerson, or those who believe in or sympathize with him. Mr. Emerson has been said to have imported his doctrine from Germany. But the fact is, that no man stands more independ-

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ently of other minds than he does. He seems to me very far from Kant or Fichte. His writings breathe the very spirit of religion and faith. Whatever his speculations may be, there is nothing in anything he says, which is inconsistent with Christianity. . . .

"It is convenient to have a name which may cover all those who contend for perfect freedom, who look for progress in philosophy and theology, and who sympathize with each other in the hope that the future will not always be as the past. The name 'Transcendentalist' seems to be thus fixed upon all who profess to be on the movement side, however they may differ among themselves. But union in sympathy differs from union in belief. Since we cannot avoid names, I prefer the term 'New School' to the other long name. This could comprehend all free seekers after truth, however their opinions differ."

In "The Transcendentalist," a lecture given in Boston in January, 1842, Emerson commented on the origin of the word:

"It is well known to most of my audience that the Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, of Königsberg, who replied to the skeptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that there were intuitions of the mind itself; and he denominated them *Transcendental* forms. The extraordinary profoundness and precision of that man's thinking have given vogue to his nomenclature, in Europe and America, to that extent that whatever belongs to the class of intuitive thought is popularly called at the present day *Transcendental*."

George Ripley, who gave up his church in Boston to found Brook Farm, wrote in a letter to his congregation, October 1, 1840:

"There is a class of persons who desire a reform in the prevailing philosophy of the day. These are called Transcendentalists, because they believe in an order of truths which transcends the sphere of the external senses. Their leading idea is the supremacy of mind over matter. Hence they maintain that the truth of religion does not depend on tradition, nor historical facts, but has an unerring witness in the soul. There is a light, they believe, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; there is a faculty in all—the most degraded, the most ignorant, the most obscure—to perceive spiritual truth when distinctly presented; and the ultimate appeal on all moral questions is not to a jury of scholars, a hierarchy of divines, or the prescriptions of a creed, but to the common sense of the human race."

Goddard's summary in *The Cambridge History of American Literature* is as follows:

"New England Transcendentalism was a late and local manifestation of that great movement for the liberation of humanity which, invading practically every sphere of civilized activity, swept over Europe at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. . . .

"According to this view of the world, the one reality is the vast spiritual background of existence, the Over-Soul, God, within which all other being is unified and from which it derives its life. Because of this indwelling of divinity, every

part of the world, however small, is a microcosm, comprehending within itself, like Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall, all the laws and meaning of the whole. The soul of each individual, therefore, is identical with the soul of the world, and contains, latently, all that that larger soul contains. . . .

"From these central conceptions all the other teachings of the transcendentalists are derived: their doctrines of self-reliance and individualism, of the identity of moral and physical laws, of the essential unity of all religions, of the negative nature of evil; their spirit of complete tolerance and of absolute optimism; their defiance of tradition and disregard for all external authority."

For the modern reader Transcendentalism means primarily Emerson; but for Emerson's contemporaries, certainly before 1850, he by no means stood out as he does for us. Transcendentalist ideas were the common property of the group, and he is better remembered than others because he was a profounder thinker and a greater writer than any of them with the possible exception of Thoreau. Emerson, who disliked to be labeled with the name of a party or a sect, wrote to his mother on March 28, 1840, from Providence, where he was lecturing:

"You must know I am reckoned here a Transcendentalist, and what that beast is, all persons in Providence have a great appetite to know: So I am carried duly about from house to house, and all the young persons ask me, when the Lecture is coming upon the Great Subject? In vain I disclaim all knowledge of that sect of Lidian's [Mrs. Emerson's],—it is still expected I shall break out with the New Light in the next discourse. I have read here my essay on the Age, the one on Homer, one on Love, & one on Politics,—These seem all to be regarded as mere screens & subterfuges while this dread Transcendentalism is still kept back. They have various definitions of the word current here. One man, of whom I have been told, in good earnest defined it as 'Operations on the Teeth'; A young man named Rodman, answered an inquiry by saying 'It was a nickname which those who stayed behind, gave to those who went ahead.' Meantime, all the people come to Lecture, and I am told the Lyceum makes money by me."

Emerson could even laugh at the vagaries of reformers much as Lowell did. (See his lecture, "New England Reformers," 1844.) He wrote in his journal on one occasion: "Transcendentalism means, says our accomplished Mrs. B., with a wave of her hand, a *little* beyond," and on another: "The view taken of Transcendentalism in State Street is that it threatens to invalidate contracts." His fullest discussion of the subject appears in his Boston lecture, January, 1842, on "The Transcendentalist." He began by saying: "The first thing we have to say respecting what are called *new views* here in New England, at the present time, is, that they are not new, but the very oldest of thoughts cast into the mould of these new times." "What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us," he went on to say, "is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842." He then proceeded to distinguish the Materialists, relying on experience and "beginning to think from the data of the senses," from the Idealists, relying on consciousness and perceiving that "the senses are not final." He suggested that Transcendentalism is "the Saturnalia or excess of Faith; the presentiment of a faith proper to man in his integrity, excessive only when his imperfect obedience hinders the satisfaction of his wish."

"Although, as we have said, there is no pure Transcendentalist, yet the tendency to respect the intuitions and to give them, at least in our creed, all authority over our experience, has deeply colored the conversation and poetry of the

present day; and the history of genius and of religion in these times, though impure, and as yet not incarnated in any powerful individual, will be the history of this tendency."

In the final beautiful paragraph of "The Transcendentalist" Emerson suggested that the solitary thoughts of the Transcendental thinker, trusting to Reason, might outlast the achievements of extraverts relying upon the Understanding:

"Amidst the downward tendency and proneness of things, when every voice is raised for a new road or another statute or a subscription of stock; for an improvement in dress, or in dentistry; for a new house or a larger business; for a political party, or the division of an estate—will you not tolerate one or two solitary voices in the land, speaking for thoughts and principles not marketable or perishable? Soon these improvements and mechanical inventions will be superseded; these modes of living lost out of memory; these cities rotted, ruined by war, by new inventions, by new seats of trade, or the geologic changes:—all gone, like the shells which sprinkle the sea-beach with a white colony to-day, forever renewed to be forever destroyed. But the thoughts which these few hermits strove to proclaim by silence as well as by speech, not only by what they did, but by what they forbore to do, shall abide in beauty and strength, to reorganize themselves in nature, to invest themselves anew in other, perhaps higher endowed and happier mixed clay than ours, in fuller union with the surrounding system."

VIII

For the New Englander, the literary horizon extended to Europe and occasionally even to the Orient, but in his own country it ended not far to the south and west of the Hudson River. Writers of the South and the Middle West—perhaps no less provincial—complained that the New Englanders, like the Greeks, praised only their own books and ignored those of the "barbarians" outside. A Philadelphia poet, George Henry Boker, wrote to a Southern poet, Paul Hamilton Hayne, on April 15, 1867: "Who wrote that kindly notice of me in a Charleston newspaper? Was it you, old true-penny? . . . for it was so widely copied in our papers that it made the Yankees furious. According to the Yankee creed, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson and Whittier are the only poets in America, and also the only poets that New England will permit to exist." One must not imagine, however, that the New England authors were any more of a mutual admiration society than those in Charleston or Philadelphia.

One must be on his guard against provincialism even in our literary historians. Present-day New England students of American literature are as free from provincialism as any of their contemporaries, but their predecessors were not. In an address on "The Course of American History," Woodrow Wilson warned against the provincial bias of our political historians:

"Our national history has been written for the most part by New England men. All honor to them! . . . They have written our history, nevertheless, from but a single point of view. From where they sit, the whole of the great development looks like an Expansion of New England. Other elements but play along the sides of the great process by which the Puritan has worked out the development of the nation and policy. . . . To the Southern writer, too, the story looks much the same. . . . It is the history of the Suppression of the South."

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This provincialism mars one of the best-written of our literary studies, Barrett Wendell's *A Literary History of America* (1900), of which Fred Lewis Pattee—himself reared and educated in New England—remarks that it "should have been entitled 'A Literary History of Harvard University, with Incidental Glimpses of the Minor Writers of America.'" Wendell's provincial bias is evident from the following passage taken from an address on American literature given at Vassar College in 1893: "Nor can I feel that we have erred, while considering American literature, in attending chiefly to that New England which to me is the spot on earth where life means most. In America, I believe, only New England has expressed itself in a literary form which inevitably commands attention from whoever pursues such inquiries as ours." Of Poe, Wendell remarks: "Poe, to be sure, is fantastic and meretricious throughout." By 1909, however, when he delivered an address at the University of Virginia at the Poe centenary, Wendell had modified his position. "The literature of New England," he said, ". . . is first of all, not American or national, but local."

IX

The demand for a national literature continues throughout this period—and, indeed, down to the present time—but there was a reaction against the excessive literary nationalism of earlier writers. There was also, as we have already noted, a growing demand in the South and the West for literatures which would represent those sections. Emerson and Whitman are the ablest champions of literary Americanism. See Emerson's "The American Scholar" and Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*. The reaction against excessive nationalism is well expressed in Longfellow's *Kavanagh*, the preface to Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, and Boker's "Ad Criticum." Poe, who cared little enough for Americanism in any form, wrote in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for April, 1836:

"There was a time, it is true, when we cringed to foreign opinion—let us even say when we paid a most servile deference to British critical dicta. That an American book could, by any possibility, be worthy perusal, was an idea by no means extensively prevalent in the land; and if we were induced to read at all the productions of our native writers, it was only after repeated assurances from England that such productions were not altogether contemptible. . . . [But now] We throw off, with the most presumptuous and unmeaning hauteur, *all* deference whatever to foreign opinion—we forget, in the puerile inflation of vanity, that *the world* is the true theatre of the biblical histrio—we get up a hue and cry about the necessity of encouraging native writers of merit—we blindly fancy that we can accomplish this by indiscriminate puffing of good, bad, and indifferent, without taking the trouble to consider that what we choose to denominate encouragement is thus, by its general application, rendered precisely the reverse. In a word, so far from being ashamed of the many disgraceful literary failures to which our own inordinate vanities and misapplied patriotism have lately given birth, and so far from deeply lamenting that these daily puerilities are of home manufacture, we adhere pertinaciously to our original blindly conceived idea, and thus often find ourselves involved in the gross paradox of liking a stupid book the better, because, sure enough, its stupidity is American."

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The position of the South in the literary history of this period of controversy and civil war was somewhat anomalous and has been too little understood. That region now had more and somewhat abler writers than in any preceding period, but it enjoyed no such literary renaissance as that of the New England-New York area. The greatest of all Southern writers, Poe, spent his maturest years in Philadelphia and New York. In an age marked by industrial development and reform the conservative South, now committed to the defense of slavery on principle, found itself the object of increasingly violent attacks. Southerners came more and more to feel that Northern writing did not represent their section; that it was growing rapidly more hostile to the Southern way of life. The North, it was felt, had undertaken to supply the whole country with reading matter and would accept nothing from the South in return. Hence a demand for a Southern literature, a literature which would justify the South and portray life from the Southern point of view. Only half-consciously the South was moving toward a separate nationality. The demand for a Southern literature was in some respects comparable to the widespread demand for an American literature which followed the Revolution.

South and North were developing in opposite directions, and each accused the other of departing from the genuine American tradition. The provincial Webster had developed into the champion of nationalism while Calhoun, who had been an outstanding nationalist, by 1830 had become the chief spokesman for a minority section. The agricultural South felt that it was in a state of economic vassalage to the industrial North. Northern bankers, merchants, and traders had monopolized the cotton market. The tariff seemed to Southerners designed merely to enrich Northern manufacturers at the expense of Southern farmers. At a meeting of the Southern Commercial Convention in New Orleans in 1855, Albert Pike, a New England-born poet who had made his home in Arkansas, said:

“From the rattle with which the nurse tickles the ear of the child born in the south to the shroud that covers the cold form of the dead, every thing comes to us from the north. We rise from between sheets made in northern looms, and pillows of northern feathers, to wash in basins made in the north, dry our beards on northern towels, and dress ourselves in garments woven in northern looms; we eat from northern plates and dishes; our rooms are swept with northern brooms, our gardens dug with northern spades, and our bread kneaded in trays or dishes of northern wood or tin; and the very wood which feeds our fires is cut with northern axes, helved with hickory brought from Connecticut and New York.”

At the very time when the North was becoming more national and democratic, the South was committing itself to the defense of slavery on principle. Irving, who was in South Carolina in 1832 at the time of the Nullification controversy, wrote: “It is really lamentable to see such a fine set of gallant fellows as these leading nullifiers are, so madly in the wrong.” Their point of view was expressed by a Carolinian of a later day, Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, who said: “I am a Charlestonian first, a South Carolinian next, and after that a Southerner.”

The movement for a separate Southern nationality came too late. Even if the Confederacy could have won the war, it would not have been possible for the South to realize its ideal of economic self-sufficiency. A victorious Confederacy would have continued a debtor region to

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be exploited by Northern or European bankers, merchants, and manufacturers unless it had given up its dependence upon agriculture—the very basis of the social system for which it fought.

Southerners felt with some justice that Northern writing was unfair to the South. There were complaints of Northern textbooks. One writer pointed out that a typical geography text gave “two pages to Connecticut onions and broom-corn, and ten lines to Louisiana and sugar.” Another writer wondered what improvement Southern boys and girls could “derive from reading works wherein they are constantly informed that their fathers, and ancestors generally, for the last two hundred years, have been a heartless, cruel, bloody-minded set of robbers, kidnappers, and slave-whippers. . . .” By 1850 even the purely literary magazines of the North seemed to have become hostile to the South. In self-defense the South must produce its own literature. Abolition was an attack on one form of property which would eventually, so Southerners believed, result in socialism or communism and the destruction of all forms of private property.

If one studies what Emerson, Channing, or Lowell wrote about the South in these years, one notes a growing hostility not only to slavery but to nearly everything Southern. Emerson, who as a young man had spent a winter in South Carolina and Florida, in 1856 contrasted South and North. “I do not see,” he said, “how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one state.” The North he saw as “adorned with education, with skilful labor, with arts, with long prospective interests, with sacred family ties, with honor and justice.” In the South, which seemed to lack all these things, “life is a fever; man is an animal, given to pleasure, practising with deadly weapons to defend himself against his slaves and against companions brought up in the same idle and dangerous way.” Forgetting Rome and Athens, Northern writers came to believe that people who held slaves were necessarily semi-barbarians. In 1866 Lowell wrote of the civilization of the Old South: “There were no public libraries, no colleges worthy of the name; there was no art, no science,—still worse, no literature but Simms’s: there was no desire for them.”

In this period South and North, though they spoke the same language, ceased to understand each other. The Abolitionists had created a legend of a Southern slavocracy which had little basis in actuality. Apart from slavery, the political life of the South was as democratic as that of the North. Southern leaders in all departments now came predominantly from the large middle class and not from the small minority of wealthy planters. Edmund Quincy wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* for December, 1857: “No antiquity hallows, no public services consecrate, no gifts of lofty culture adorn, no graces of noble breeding embellish the coarse and sordid oligarchy (the Slave States) that gives law to us. And in the blighting shadow of slavery letters die and art cannot live.” “What book,” he asked, “has the South ever given to the libraries of the world? What work of art has she ever added to its galleries?”

The attempt to create a distinctively Southern literature involved many difficulties and the results achieved are not of great importance. The South had no great commercial publishers, and books published by Southern printers did not sell. Southern readers preferred to buy Northern books and magazines. The numerous amateurs who launched Southern magazines never got adequate support from their own section. The population of the South was predominantly agricultural; and though that section had a larger proportion of college-bred men than the North, country gentlemen have never anywhere contributed greatly to literature.

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The Southern writers of the period nearly all lived in the cities and small towns; they were not planters but teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and many of them had been either born or educated in the North.

The peculiar difficulties of the Southern writer are well stated in an article, "Literature in the South," which Henry Timrod published in *Russell's Magazine* in August, 1859. No writer anywhere, he thought, had such peculiar difficulties or so limited an audience as this "Pariah of modern literature." "It is," he said, "the settled conviction of the North that genius is indigenous there, and flourishes only in a Northern atmosphere. It is equally the firm conviction of the South that genius—literary genius, at least—is an exotic that will not flower on a Southern soil." If the Southern writer published a book in the North, the South was indignant that he had not chosen a Southern publisher; but if he published his book in the South, he found more than half of the edition left on his hands. If he gave a beautiful and truthful picture of Southern life, the North would abuse him; if he published a volume of poems with no Southern local coloring, his own people would condemn him as lacking in Southern feeling. "It is, unfortunately," he said, "not in the power of a people to confer together and say, 'Come, now, let us arise, and build up a literature.'"

The South cut itself off from some of the most important literary influences of the age. Southern writers could describe the beauties of nature and write lovingly of the historic past of their section; but that large part of the Romantic Movement which involved the desire to reshape the social and economic order had little influence in the conservative South. Thus Simms, Poe, Timrod, and other writers shut themselves off from what gave most vitality to the work of Emerson, Thoreau, and Melville. The first really productive period in the South was not to come until slavery was a thing of the past.¹

The best talents of the South went into politics and agriculture rather than into literature. The only notable literary center in the South was in Charleston. Southern writers were widely scattered, and they had in general little contact with one another. Their books were generally published in the North, and they often wrote for Northern magazines. In the South literary fashions lagged a little behind those of the North much as those of the North lagged behind those of the European world. Nevertheless, Poe, Simms, Kennedy, Hayne, and Timrod kept abreast of current literature even though lesser Southern writers did not. There was a good deal more literary activity in the Old South than has generally been supposed. Until recent years the literature of the ante-bellum South has received almost no scholarly study, and it is easy to misjudge its importance. (See two volumes in the American Writers Series: Edd W. Parks's *Southern Poets* and Gregory Paine's *Southern Prose*. The editor of this anthology has in preparation a history of the literature of the Old South.)

Apart from the work of Poe, Kennedy, Simms, and Timrod, the most distinctive literary contribution of the South came from the humorists. The unpretentious sketches which often first appeared in newspapers come closer to being a really Southern literature than the more literary pieces which appeared in magazines dedicated to creating a literature of the South.

In 1845 William T. Porter, editor of the *Spirit of the Times*, in which many of the best

¹ For a much fuller treatment of the subject, see Jay B. Hubbell, "Literary Nationalism in the Old South," in *American Studies in Honor of William Kenneth Boyd* (1940).

humorous narratives first appeared, published *The Big Bear of Arkansas, and Other Sketches, Illustrative of Characters and Incidents in the South and Southwest*. In his Preface he said: "A new vein of literature, as original as it is inexhaustible in its source, has been opened in this country within a very few years, with the most marked success." In the Old Southwest, he noted, the frontier had passed on but had left behind "scores of original characters to be encountered nowhere else under the sun." The title story in Porter's collection, T. B. Thorpe's "The Big Bear of Arkansas," is of the tall-tale variety, and the humor comes from exaggeration. The backwoodsman from Arkansas boasts that his state is "the creation state, the finishing-up country—a state where the *sile* runs down to the center of the 'arth, and government gives you a title to every inch of it. . . . It's a state without a fault, it is." When a Hoosier interrupts: "Excepting mosquitoes," the backwoodsman replies: "But mosquitoes is natur, and I never find fault with her, her trees ar large, her rivers ar large, her varmints ar large, and a small mosquito would be of no more use in Arkansaw than preaching in a crane-break." This type of humor figured in the David Crockett almanacs, and in later times in the tall tales of Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, and Mike Fink.

The South was a region where men swapped stories at courthouses, country stores, and taverns; and in Southern humorous writing the oral tradition is strong. Many of the humorous sketches published in the *Spirit of the Times* had probably been told many times before being committed to writing. The men who wrote these stories were not professional writers or backwoodsmen but lawyers, doctors, journalists, soldiers, country gentlemen, and sportsmen; and they wrote them primarily for readers on the Eastern seaboard, not in the backwoods. In the semi-frontier regions of the South and West the froth and dregs of society were often more conspicuous than the solid, unpretending men of the better sort. Here was rich material for the satiric humorist: quacks pretending to be physicians, justices of the peace setting up as lawyers, peddlers turned bankers, and so on. There was an excess of vulgarity, pretension, humbuggery; there were fools in plenty and rascals and sharpers who fleeced them. Here was a harvest for the humorist with an eye for character and the gift of telling a story; and the materials were fresh, for since the time of William Byrd no important Southern writer had treated the humors of the backwoods.

Among the best of the Southern humorists were Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, author of *Georgia Scenes* (1835); Johnson Jones Hooper, creator of Captain Simon Suggs; Joseph Glover Baldwin, author of *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi* (1853); George W. Harris, who described the practical jokes of Sut Lovingood, a Tennessee mountaineer; but there were many more. Among the forgotten humorists was a North Carolina newspaperman, Charles Napoleon Bonaparte Evans, who created Jesse Holmes the Fool-Killer, destined to figure much later in stories by O. Henry, George Ade, and Stephen Vincent Benét. One of the last and best was Charles Henry Smith, whose "Bill Arp" letters helped to keep up the morale of the South during the Civil War and the trying years of Reconstruction.

The Southern humorists were realistic rather than romantic, and they were comparatively free from the sentimentality and artificiality which characterized so much popular writing of the period. They were the immediate predecessors of the local colorists of the 'eighties and 'nineties. In Virginia, George W. Bagby was to influence Thomas Nelson Page; and in Georgia, Longstreet and Smith were to affect the work of Joel Chandler Harris. The tradition of

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Southern and Southwestern humor culminates in the work of Mark Twain, who grew up in a slaveholding community on the banks of the Mississippi and in his apprentice days wrote for newspapers humorous sketches of the traditional type.

His friend, William Dean Howells, once went so far as to say that what we call Western humor is more properly described as Southern humor. This, however, is a considerable exaggeration. There was a humorous tradition in the North as well as in the South. In New England humorous writing of a different sort figured largely in the work of Lowell and Holmes, but New England had also its crackerbox philosophers. The earliest of these, Seba Smith, a Down-Easter from Maine, wrote the widely circulated letters of "Jack Downing." Other important Northern humorists were Henry Wheeler Shaw, who wrote under the name of "Josh Billings," and, most important of all, Charles Farrar Browne, whose "Artemus Ward" stories are perhaps the best before Mark Twain. It was for Browne that Mark Twain wrote out "The Jumping Frog" story which gave him his first taste of what he would probably have called notoriety. The humorist tradition lingers in attenuated form in the twentieth century. Will Rogers as a humorous commentator on politics worked in a tradition which goes back to Artemus Ward, Hosea Biglow, and Jack Downing.²

X

While Americans were vigorously demanding a national literature, literary influences from Europe were becoming more numerous and more complex. The steamship had brought the United States closer to Europe and made it still more difficult for an American to write without being influenced by his European contemporaries, even those who wrote in a different language. Some popular magazines were made up almost entirely of material copied from British periodicals, and books of popular British authors were quickly reprinted in this country. Among English authors who were widely read in America were Carlyle, Tennyson, Dickens, and Thackeray. "The influence of Carlyle upon American thought and letters," says F. L. Mott, "was probably greater in force, directness, and intimacy than that of any other foreign writer of his century." More widely read in America, however, were Dickens and Mrs. Hemans, who was as popular as "the sweet singer of Hartford," Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney. Dickens's great reputation suffered somewhat from his unfavorable treatment of the United States in *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which, according to Carlyle, caused all America to rise up like one universal soda bottle. Americans were as quick to discern the merits of Tennyson and Browning as were Englishmen. In this period British authors became increasingly conscious of America. It was apparent that a large portion of every British writer's readers were to be found in the United States. It was beginning to be profitable for the English author to give lectures or readings in this country, as both Dickens and Thackeray did. The growth of democracy in England gave the British travelers a somewhat more sympathetic attitude toward American institutions than their predecessors had had. For representative selections, see Allan

² For fuller treatment of American humor, see Walter Blair, *Native American Humor* (1937); Constance Rourke, *American Humor* (1931); Jennette Tandy, *Crackerbox Philosophers* (1925); A. P. Hudson (ed.), *Humor of the Old Deep South* (1936); and Franklin J. Meine (ed.), *Tall Tales of the Southwest* (1930).

For discussion of the question of to what extent American humor is American, see the articles by DeLancey Ferguson, Constance Rourke, and others listed in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947), pp. 272-273.

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Nevins's *America Through British Eyes* (1948). See also Clarence Gohdes's important study, *American Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (1944).

With improved means of transportation, Americans visited Europe in increasing numbers. In fact, a visit to Europe was often felt to be an indispensable part of one's education. With the exception of Whittier, Thoreau, and Whitman, most of our better-known writers went to Europe. Poe spent five years of his boyhood in England. Emerson was in Europe three times. In 1832 he went abroad primarily to see four men: Landor, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle. On his second visit in 1847-1848 he lectured for several months to British audiences. Holmes spent two years in the study of medicine in Paris. Longfellow and Lowell, both teachers of modern languages at Harvard, went to Europe to prepare themselves for their work. The most indefatigable literary traveler was Bayard Taylor, the translator of *Faust* and author of *Views Afoot* and many other popular travel books. Hawthorne, Lowell, Boker, and Taylor—like Irving before them—held consular appointments. Although some of our authors were greatly attracted by Europe, none of them settled there permanently, like Henry James and Bret Harte in a later period. In biographies, travel books, etc., there is a wealth of material for one who wishes to study the American writer's reaction to Europe. Two of the most important books are Emerson's *English Traits* and Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*. Englishmen, who had always felt privileged to criticize America, did not enjoy the passages in which Emerson and Hawthorne expressed mild disapproval of certain British traits.

In his "Remarks on National Literature" (1830), William Ellery Channing maintained that American writers had formed themselves too exclusively upon British models; he wisely suggested that they acquaint themselves with other European literatures—as Irving had already done. The influence of continental literatures became an important means of freeing American literature from some of its limitations; but at first the linguistic difficulty was a great obstacle, for modern languages were then little taught in our schools. The strongest outside influence, apart from that of English literature, was the German.³ The literature of Germany, coming partly through Coleridge and Carlyle, had considerable influence upon the New England Transcendentalists. The Germans, however, were slow in developing an interest in America and American literature; but they did read the works of two authors who visited this country and wrote of the West: Karl Postl (Charles Sealsfield) and Friedrich Gerstäcker.

In spite of the traditional friendship with France, it was not easy for the average American to appreciate the merits of the French. He judged them rather by their chefs and their dancing masters than by their great writers. George Sand was introduced to America as the immoral author of immoral books. The difficulties which American readers in Victorian times had with her novels are plainly revealed in Howard Mumford Jones's article, "American Comment on George Sand, 1837-1848," *American Literature*, III, 389-407 (January, 1932). See also his *America and French Culture, 1750-1848* (1927). There were Americans, however, who had some understanding of the French. Emerson in Paris in May, 1848, wrote in his journal: "I have been exaggerating the English merits all winter, and disparaging the French. Now I am

³ See S. H. Goodnight, *German Literature in American Magazines prior to 1846* (1907); M. H. Haertel, *German Literature in American Magazines, 1846 to 1889* (1908); Lillie V. Hathaway, *German Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century in England and America as Reflected in the Journals, 1840-1914* (1936); James Taft Hatfield, *New Light on Longfellow* (1933); and Orie W. Long, *Literary Pioneers: Early American Explorers of European Culture* (1935).

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correcting my judgment of both, and the French have risen very fast." In September of the same year he wrote: "George Sand is a great genius, and yet owes to her birth in France her entire freedom from the cant and snuffle of our dead Christianity."

A Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, was the author of *Democracy in America*—a classic like James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* of a later day. The French were considerably interested in certain American authors, especially Cooper and Poe; but they have never greatly cared for the New England writers. Poe's conception of literature is congenial to the French, and his vogue in France was enormous. See C. P. Cambiaire, *The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe in France* (1927). Poe began to be known in France a few years before his death in 1849. One of his earliest admirers was Charles Baudelaire, who wrote: "In 1846 or 1847 I became acquainted with a few fragments of Edgar Poe. I experienced a peculiar emotion. . . . I found,—believe me, as you will,—poems and tales of which I already had a vague, confused, and ill-ordered idea, and which Poe had known how to arrange and bring to perfection." A French critic of American literature, Philarète Chasles, wrote a book which was translated and published in New York in 1852 under the title, *Anglo-American Literature and Manners*. The modern reader is struck by the lengthy discussion of Herman Melville, whose *Moby-Dick* had appeared only the year before.

The complex subject of our cultural and literary relations with the Old World was until recent years largely neglected on both sides of the Atlantic, and it has not yet been adequately studied. We have here tried only to suggest its great extent and importance. In modern times no national literature has grown up in isolation but has always been profoundly influenced by literary tendencies affecting the whole western world. American literature is no exception. Even our literary nationalists, like Emerson and Whitman, have felt the influence of important European writers. Emerson, for example, drew from Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, Goethe, the Neo-Platonists, and even Oriental writers. He was, of course, original enough to make his own what he borrowed. In the nineteenth century the United States began to repay its vast literary debt to Europe. Two or three examples must suffice. Dickens owed something to Irving and Matthew Arnold to Emerson, and many English and continental authors have been influenced by Poe and Whitman.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809 - 1849

Thus I have written no books, and have been so far essentially a Magazinish [illegible] bearing not only willingly but cheerfully sad poverty and the thousand consequent contumelies and other ills which the condition of the mere Magazinish entails upon him in America, where, more than in any other region upon the face of the globe, to be poor is to be despised.

POE TO CHARLES ANTHON, June, 1844.

Once as yet, and once only, has there sounded out of it all [the literature of America] one pure note of original song—worth singing, and echoed from the singing of no other man; a note of song neither wide nor deep, but utterly true, rich, clear, and native to the singer; the short exquisite music, subtle and simple and somber and sweet, of Edgar Poe.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE,
Under the Microscope (1872).

Edgar Allan¹ Poe was born on January 19, 1809, exactly two years after another great Virginian, Robert E. Lee. Ironically enough, Poe was born in Boston, to which he often referred as the "Frogpond." Bred in the South, he had no love for New England and little admiration for any of the New England writers except Hawthorne and, at times, Longfellow and Lowell. On July 6, 1842, he wrote to Daniel Bryan: "I shall make war to the knife against the New England assumption of 'All the decency and all the talent' which has been so disgustingly manifested in the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold's 'Poets and Poetry of America.' " The New England writers cared quite as little for Poe as he for them. Emerson called him "the jingle-man."

Much is known about Poe's life, but the man and his work do not lend themselves to easy and accurate generalization. As Hervey Allen well says, "any brief, comfortably-clever, and convenient presentation of his character, either from a literary, psychological, or romantic standpoint is bound to be misleading." Even at this late day students of Poe do not agree as to his character or the value of his writings. Most of his important literary contemporaries differed from him in that they were not wholly dependent on their pens for their livelihood. Most of them were well-born and had a secure position in the social scale. Since he lived in a time

¹ Note the spelling of Poe's middle name, which apparently few journalists or undergraduates ever learn to spell correctly.

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when nearly all our writers were model gentlemen, Poe's shortcomings in conduct seemed very grave. He was the first conspicuous black sheep in the American literary flock. American critics could not look upon Poe's deficiencies as leniently as they looked upon those of Burns or Byron. There was no one to say, as a latter-day critic, J. E. Spingarn, has said in his "The New Criticism," "The poet's only moral duty, as a poet, is to be true to his art, and to express his vision of reality as well as he can." In the last year of his life, the year of the gold-rush to California, Poe wrote to his friend, F. W. Thomas:

"Depend upon it after all, Thomas, literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For my own part there is no seducing me from the path. I shall be a *littérateur* at least, all my life; nor would I abandon the hopes which still lead me on for all the gold in California. Talking of gold and of the temptations at present held out to 'poor-devil authors' did it ever strike you that all that is really valuable to a man of letters—to a poet in especial—is absolutely unpurchasable? Love, fame, the dominion of intellect, the consciousness of power, the thrilling sense of beauty, the free air of Heaven, exercise of body & mind—these and such as these are really all that a poet cares for: . . ."

Poe's parents were actors; the mother was an Englishwoman, the father a Marylander of a good family somewhat run down. They both died early, leaving three small children. At the age of three Edgar was taken into the family of John Allan, a Scotch merchant living in Richmond, Virginia, who was later to become wealthy. Allan, although he never legally adopted the boy, brought him up as if he were his own child. In 1815 the Allans went to England for a stay of five years. For a part of this time Poe studied in the Manor House School at Stoke Newington, which is the background of his story, "William Wilson." In 1818 Allan wrote of him that he was "a fine boy" and could read Latin "pretty sharply." On their return to Richmond, Poe was sent to a local academy, where he showed ability in swimming as well as in languages and declamation. This was the period of his friendship with the mother of one of his school friends, Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard, to whom "To Helen" is addressed. As a youth, Poe was sensitive and moody and had few close friends. An estrangement was developing between Poe and Allan, which Mrs. Allan, until her death in 1829, tried to prevent from becoming a complete break. In one sense the difficulties between the two constitute the old, familiar story of the practical, prosaic father or guardian trying to make of the young musician, painter, or poet a good lawyer, bookkeeper, country gentleman, or lighthouse engineer. But John Allan, it develops, was not by any means the "benevolent Virginian gentleman" that Barrett Wendell, writing about 1900, thought he was. The youthful Poe was doubtless difficult to handle, but Allan's unsympathetic treatment of him is not wholly to be explained as that of a practical guardian trying to make of his foster son a substantial, self-supporting member of society.

Poe spent most of the calendar year 1826 at Thomas Jefferson's newly founded University of Virginia, where he made an excellent record in Latin and French. Although he seems not in any way to have incurred the displeasure of the academic authorities, he was unhappy. Just before leaving Richmond, he had become engaged to Sarah Elmira Royster (who seems to be the original of the heroine of his "Tamerlane"); but her parents intercepted the letters of the lovers. Perhaps Elmira's parents had learned that John Allan, now well-to-do, had no intention of making Poe his heir. At any rate, they persuaded her to marry another man. That Poe took

to gambling and drinking, both of which were common vices at the University, was due, he claims, to his guardian's stinginess in not giving him sufficient money to pay his University fees and living expenses. At the end of the year Poe, owing about \$2500 in debts of honor which Allan refused to pay, was taken back to Richmond. Although Allan seems not to have put Poe to work in his store, as is often said, there was in March, 1827, a bitter quarrel between the two, after which the eighteen-year-old boy left Richmond without money and virtually disowned by his foster father. Somehow he made his way to Boston, where in the same year he published his first volume, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, which is now probably the most valuable collector's item in American literature. For two years Poe served in the U. S. Army under the name of Edgar A. Perry. Part of the time he was stationed at Charleston, South Carolina, where doubtless he became familiar with the geographical background of "The Gold-Bug." In 1829 he published in Baltimore his second volume of poems. The "Ligeia" passage in a long poem, "Al Aaraaf," is the first really fine poetry that he had written. But none of Poe's first three volumes of poems—there was a third in 1831—attracted much attention. Allan helped him to obtain an appointment to West Point, which Poe entered in 1830. He did well in his classes, but he was disappointed to find that his army record would not shorten the four-year period required for graduation. Finally, now that Allan had remarried, he gave up all hope of an inheritance. The work at the Military Academy was uncongenial, and perhaps he felt that even if he finished the course and obtained a commission, he would not be able to live on his salary. At any rate, Poe took the only obvious way to get out of the Academy and got himself dismissed for failure to attend classes, etc. In February, 1831, with no money and poor prospects of every kind, in poor health and spirits, he left West Point, apparently determined to live by his pen. One of the first things he did was to publish his third volume of poems in New York. The cadets, to whom he had dedicated it, must have felt badly cheated, for they had subscribed to the volume looking for lampoons on their instructors.

The next four years, which are somewhat obscure, seem to have been spent in Baltimore. With his older brother, William Henry Leonard Poe, also a poet, Poe lived with their aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm, whose daughter Virginia he was to marry a few years later. Having published three volumes of poems which attracted almost no attention, Poe now began to devote his attention to prose fiction. He submitted several stories to the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier* in competition for a prize. The *Courier* published some of the stories, but it awarded the prize to "Love's Martyr," by Miss Delia Bacon, who was later to trouble Hawthorne with her strange theory that Francis Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's plays. In 1833, however, Poe did win a prize of \$50 for his story, "MS. Found in a Bottle," in a contest held by the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter*, and he came near winning with "The Coliseum" at the same time the \$25 prize for the best poem. One of the judges in this contest was John Pendleton Kennedy the novelist, who did what he could to assist Poe. In particular, he recommended Poe to Thomas Willis White, proprietor of the recently founded *Southern Literary Messenger* (1834-1864) in Richmond. Kennedy wrote to White:

"Poe did right in referring to me. He is very clever with his pen—classical and scholar-like. He wants experience and direction, but I have no doubt he can be made very useful to you. And, poor fellow, he is *very* poor. . . . The young fellow is highly imaginative and a little *terrific*. He is at work upon a tragedy [*Politian*], but I have turned him to drudging upon whatever may make money."

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In August, 1835, Poe was back in Richmond as editorial assistant on the *Messenger*. (John Allan, who was now dead, had not mentioned Poe in his will, although he had attempted to provide for two illegitimate children.) By the end of the year Poe was practically the editor of the *Messenger*, which was then, owing largely to his efforts, the best literary magazine the South has ever had. At one time he was earning \$1000, which is probably more than he received from any of his later magazine connections. In the *Messenger* Poe published or republished a large number of his own poems and tales; but it was chiefly by his book reviews (one wonders where he had done his 'prentice work as a reviewer) that he attracted wide attention to the new magazine and greatly increased its subscription list. Unlike many other critics, Poe did not regard it as his business to praise every American author who wrote a book dealing with American materials. For him literature was an international matter, and what he wished to see was literature of high quality, no matter what materials it dealt with. He had read the British quarterlies to some purpose; and, regarding it as the critic's business to chastise literary pretenders, he could on occasion write reviews as savage as those of Lockhart, Gifford, or Jeffrey.

Poe developed quickly into an expert magazinist. His occasional drinking, however, did not please the owner of the *Messenger*, and it probably had something to do with Poe's leaving Richmond early in 1837. But he had never had a wholly free hand with the magazine. White knew that Poe was thoroughly competent, but, after all, the *Messenger* belonged to him and he wanted it run to suit himself. Poe, watching the magazine become profitable and seeing the profits go into White's pockets, felt that in New York he would fare better. Already, if we may accept as accurate what he wrote to Charles Anthon in June, 1844, he had evolved a plan for a magazine of his own:

"Before quitting the 'Messenger' I saw, or fancied I saw, through a long and dim vista, the brilliant field for ambition which a Magazine of bold and noble aims presented to him who should successfully establish it in America. I perceived that the country, from its very constitution, could not fail of affording in a few years a larger proportionate amount of readers than any upon the earth. I perceived that the whole energetic, busy spirit of the age tended wholly to Magazine literature—to the curt, the terse, the well-timed, and the readily diffused, in preference to the old forms of the verbose and ponderous and the inaccessible. I knew from personal experience that lying *perdu* among the innumerable plantations in our vast Southern and Western countries were a host of well-educated men peculiarly devoid of prejudice, who would gladly lend their influence to a really vigorous journal, provided the right means were taken of bringing it fairly within the very limited scope of their observation."

Poe, we have neglected to state, had already married his cousin, Virginia Clemm. Mrs. Clemm was a member of the Poe household until his death. She, rather than the childlike Virginia, is the heroine of the Poe story. Her practical sense and unswerving devotion kept Poe out of many difficulties.

In New York, whither Poe went in 1837—the year of a memorable financial depression—he did not find the position he expected on the *New York Review*. In 1838 he moved to Philadelphia, where he was to live for six years—a period in which he produced much of his best work, especially in prose. Philadelphia had at that time few important writers, but it was a periodical center. For about two years of the six Poe helped to edit *Burton's Gentleman's Maga-*

zine and *Graham's Magazine* after it had absorbed *Burton's*. *Graham's* was the best of the more popular magazines before the Civil War, and while Poe was connected with it, its circulation grew rapidly. Poe, however, got very tired of it and resigned to be succeeded by his future biographer and editor, the Rev. Rufus Wilmot Griswold. On May 25, 1842, Poe wrote to F. W. Thomas: "My reason for resigning was disgust with the namby-pamby character of the Magazine—a character which it was impossible to eradicate. I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music, and love-tales." Poe had expected Graham to help him to establish his own magazine, the *Penn*, or, as he later called it, the *Stylus*; but Graham, making money out of his own magazine, had no notion of founding a less popular and less profitable one. Four years later Poe wrote to Philip Pendleton Cooke: "Touching 'The Stylus':—this is the one great purpose of my literary life. . . . I wish to establish a journal in which men of genius may fight their battles, upon some terms of equality, with those dunces the men of talent." Had Poe been able to find as partner a man of means to work with him and supplement his editorial talents with capital and business acumen, the projected magazine might have become as notable as the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857-) became under Lowell some years later. Although *Graham's* and *Godey's Lady's Book*, to which Poe contributed, were the best-paying magazines of the period, he found it difficult to eke out a living. Graham paid him four or five dollars a page, while the almost forgotten N. P. Willis—the best-paid magazine writer of the time—was getting eleven. Frank Luther Mott calculates that in the year 1843, during which Poe was not an editor, he derived from his magazine contributions only about \$300. Graham regarded Poe as an excellent contributor but not an especially popular one. After Poe's death he wrote in his "Defence of Poe," a reply to Griswold:

"The character of Poe's mind was of such an order as not to be very widely in demand. The class of educated mind which he could readily and profitably address was small—the channels through which he could do so at all were few—and publishers all, or nearly all, contented with such pens as were already engaged, hesitated to incur the expense of his to an extent which would sufficiently remunerate him; hence, when he was fairly at sea, connected permanently with no publication, he suffered all the horrors of prospective destitution, with scarcely the ability of providing for immediate necessities; . . ."

In the spring of 1844 Poe moved to New York, where he was to live the remaining five years of his life. For a time he held a minor editorial position on N. P. Willis's *Evening Mirror*, which in January, 1845, published "The Raven," the first of Poe's poems to attract wide attention. Later in the year he became one of the editors of the *Broadway Journal* and finally for a brief period editor and proprietor, but in spite of his frantic borrowing of money, the declining magazine died on his hands.

The remainder of Poe's life is sad. Much of the time he was ill, and Virginia was slowly dying. In the summer of 1846 they moved to a cottage at Fordham (now in the Bronx), where Poe was deeply mortified to learn that a public appeal to charity was being made in their behalf. In January, 1847, Virginia died. Poe was again ill, and from this time on his drinking grew worse. His later published letters show him almost hysterically eager for feminine sympathy. Elizabeth Oakes Smith (Mrs. Seba Smith), who knew him in these years, wrote after his death: "Men, such as Edgar Poe, will always have an ideal of themselves by which they represent the chivalry of a Bayard and the heroism of a Viking, when, in fact, they are utterly dependent and tor-

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mented with womanish sensibilities." After a visit to Richmond in 1849, in the course of which he became re-engaged to Sarah Elmira Royster, now a widow, Poe set out for New York. He died in Baltimore on his way north. The exact circumstances will probably never be known, but it seems probable that illness and delirium were brought on by drinking. He died on October 7, 1849, at the age of forty.

Two days after Poe's death, Griswold published under the signature of "Ludwig" an article in the New York *Tribune* beginning:

"Edgar Allan Poe is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will startle many, *but few will be grieved by it.* The poet was well known personally or by reputation, in all this country; he had readers in England, and in several of the states of Continental Europe; *but he had few or no friends;* and the regret for his death will be suggested principally by the consideration that in him literary art lost one of its most brilliant, but erratic stars."

Griswold was the first editor of Poe's works. The memoir of Poe which he included greatly displeased Mrs. Clemm, for whose benefit the edition was published. For a long time Griswold's prejudiced account of Poe was the only one available. Griswold's editing of Poe's works was competent by the standards of the time. "It was as biographer, not as editor," remarks Killis Campbell, "that Griswold sinned against Poe." Miss Joy Bayless's *Rufus Wilmot Griswold* (1943) takes a somewhat more favorable attitude toward Poe's literary executor.

The Providence poetess, Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, to whom Poe was once engaged, issued in 1860 her defense, *Edgar Poe and His Critics*, reprinted in 1949 with an illuminating introduction by Oral S. Coad. Not until 1880, when the Englishman, J. H. Ingram, published his life of Poe, was there anything like a real biography. The best life is Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (1941); but two earlier biographies of importance are: George E. Woodberry, *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe* (1885; expanded to two volumes in 1909), and Hervey Allen, *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe* (1926; revised edition, 1948). Certain special works are: B. A. Booth and C. E. Jones, *A Concordance to the Poetical Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (1941); C. P. Cambiaire, *The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe in France* (1927); Killis Campbell, *The Mind of Poe and Other Studies* (1933); Norman Foerster, *American Criticism* (1928); Napier Wilt, "Poe's Attitude toward His Tales," *Modern Philology*, XXV, 101-105 (August, 1927); Edward Hungerford, "Poe and Phrenology," *American Literature*, II, 209-231 (November, 1930); David K. Jackson, *Poe and The Southern Literary Messenger* (1934); Floyd Stovall, "Poe's Debt to Coleridge," *University of Texas Studies in English*, X, 70-127; and George E. DeMille, *Literary Criticism in America* (1931). Still of value are the essays in E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America* (1898) and J. M. Robertson, *New Essays towards a Critical Method* (1897), both of which are more favorable than the essay in W. C. Brownell, *American Prose Masters* (1909). The best edition of Poe's writings is the Virginia Edition edited by James A. Harrison (1902), now unfortunately out of print. The second volume of Harrison's biography is made up of letters by or about Poe. The most nearly complete edition available is that of Stedman and Woodberry (10 vols., 1894-1895). See also *The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe* (1946) edited by A. H. Quinn and E. H. O'Neill. There is an excellent one-volume edition of the tales, edited by Killis Campbell (1927), in the American Authors Series. Excellent editions of the poems are those of Killis Campbell (1917) and Thomas Ollive Mabbott (1928). The notes in Campbell's edition are indispensable. A good working bibliography appears in Margaret Alterton and Hardin Craig (eds.), *Edgar*

Allan Poe: Representative Selections (1935). See also Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947). Among more recent materials are John W. Ostrom (ed.), *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe* (2 vols., 1948), N. B. Fagin's *The Histrionic Mr. Poe* (1949), and F. O. Matthiessen's chapter on Poe in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948).

Poe's personality has impressed itself upon the popular imagination more than that of any other American writer. For the masses, he has all too often represented genius without character. For American writers since his death, he has often been a symbol of the artist struggling against a hostile world, the victim of philistinism. Among those who have written poems about him are Richard Henry Stoddard, Sarah Helen Whitman, Thomas Holley Chivers, Walter Malone, John Banister Tabb, Edwin Markham, DuBose Heyward, Karl Shapiro, and Vachel Lindsay. We reprint below a portion of a tribute by the North Carolina poet, John Henry Boner (1845-1903).

POE'S COTTAGE AT FORDHAM*

Proud, mad, but not defiant,
He touched at heaven and hell.
Fate found a rare soul pliant
And rung her changes well.
Alternately his lyre,
Stranded with strings of fire,
Led earth's most happy choir,
Or flashed with Israfel.

No singer of old story
Luting accustomed lays,
No harper for new glory,
No mendicant for praise,
He struck high chords and splendid,
Wherein were fiercely blended
Tones that unfinished ended
With his unfinished days.

Here through this lowly portal,
Made sacred by his name,
Unheralded immortal
The mortal went and came.
And fate that then denied him,
And envy that decried him,
And malice that belied him,
Have cenotaphed his fame.

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from HAWTHORNE'S TWICE TOLD
TALES
(1842)

- 5 The second and enlarged edition of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* occasioned Poe's well-known comments on the principles underlying the short story. The parts omitted below deal chiefly with stories and essays that are not represented in this anthology. Compare Poe's conception with that of Irving. Note that Poe's doctrine of the single effect is applicable to his poems as well as to his stories. Note also other words which he uses as practically synonymous with "effect": "idea," "impression," "thesis," "picture." It is not easy to find a single definite "effect" in Poe's earliest stories; but in the stories here represented the "effect" is quite definite; in fact, Poe often uses in his opening paragraph one or more phrases (such as "the redness and the horror of blood" in "The Masque of the Red Death") which indicate clearly the particular "effect" of the story.
- 10
- 15
- 20 Poe's theory of the short story seems to have made little impression on his contemporaries. It was not until forty years later that Brander Matthews resurrected and amplified Poe's theory in "The Philosophy of the Short-story." Contemporary writers of fiction, in revolt against the well-made short story, sometimes blame Poe for what was hardly his fault. In an article on "The Short Story," published in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for November 19, 1927, Ruth Suckow writes:
- 25
- 30 "I admit a preference but not a theory. It seems unprofitable to me to attack one type of short story for the benefit of another. It is definition and formulae themselves that I deny: the generalization of the

specific. The definition formulated by Mr. Edgar Allan Poe defined a short story very well—the special kind of short story, of course, which he himself was bent upon writing. The trouble came when it was utilized to define *the* short story. As soon as any *a* is inflated into a *the* it becomes a menace to art. The doctrine of The Short Story has had, does have, a blighting influence upon the production of short stories in America.”

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But it is of his [Hawthorne's] tales that we desire principally to speak. The tale proper, in our opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent, which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose. Were we bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, we should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rimed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. We need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting. We may continue the reading of a prose composition, from the very nature of prose itself, much longer than we can persevere, to any good purpose, in the perusal of a poem. This latter, if truly fulfilling the demands of the poetic sentiment, induces an exaltation of the soul which cannot be long sustained. All high excitements are necessarily transient. Thus a long poem is a paradox. And, without unity of impression, the deepest effects cannot be brought about. Epics were the offspring of an imperfect sense of Art, and their reign is no more. A poem too brief may produce a vivid, but never an intense or enduring impression. Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration or repetition of purpose—the soul is never deeply moved. There must be the dropping of the water on the rock. De Béranger¹ has wrought brilliant things—pungent and spirit-stirring—but, like all immassive bodies, they lack *momentum*, and thus fail to satisfy Poetic Sentiment. They sparkle and excite, but, from want of continuity, fail deeply to impress. Extreme brevity will degenerate into

¹ A French lyric poet (1780-1857), author of the motto of “The Fall of the House of Usher.”

epigrammatism; but the sin of extreme length is even more unpardonable. *In medio tutissimus ibis.*²

Were we called upon, however, to designate that class of composition which, next to such a poem as we have suggested, should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—we should unhesitatingly speak of the prose tale, as Mr. Hawthorne has here exemplified it. We allude to the short prose narrative, requiring from a half-hour to one or two hours in its perusal. The ordinary novel is objectionable, from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from *totality*. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simple cessation in reading, would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. There are no external or extrinsic influences—resulting from weariness or interruption.

A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents: but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided.

We have said that the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem. In fact, while

² You will go most safely in the middle course.

the *rhythm* of this latter is an essential aid in the development of the poet's highest idea—the idea of the Beautiful—the artificialities of this rhythm are an inseparable bar to the development of all points of thought or expression which have their basis in *Truth*. But Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale. Some of the finest tales are tales of ratiocination. Thus the field of this species of composition, if not in so elevated a region on the mountain of Mind, is a table-land of far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem. Its products are never so rich, but infinitely more numerous, and more appreciable by the mass of mankind. The writer of the prose tale, in short, may bring to his theme a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression—(the ratiocinative for example, the sarcastic, or the humorous) which are not only antagonistical to the nature of the poem, but absolutely forbidden by one of its most peculiar and indispensable adjuncts; we allude, of course, to rhythm. It may be added here, *par parenthèse*, that the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is laboring at great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude of such other points. . . .

LIGEIA

(1838)

Twice Poe refers to "Ligeia" as his best tale. The "effect" aimed at in this story is suggested by the motto from Joseph Glanvill. In his *A Manual of the Art of Fiction* (first published under the title *Materials and Methods of Fiction*) Clayton Hamilton has an analysis of "Ligeia" similar to that which Poe made of "The Raven" in "The Philosophy of Composition." See also the discussion of "Ligeia" in Roy P. Basler's *Sex, Symbolism, and Psychology* (1948). Edward Hungerford's "Poe and Phrenology" (*American Literature*, II, 209-231, November, 1930) throws light upon both "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher." Ligeia's prominent eyes indicate that the faculty of Language is highly developed. The "gentle prominence of the regions above the temples" refers to Love of Life.

The poem, which has its setting in the story, "The Conqueror Worm," first published in 1843, adds to the effectiveness of the story while the story furnishes an admirable setting for the poem. Professor C. W. Kent calls attention to the fact that the five stanzas of the poem correspond roughly to the five acts of a tragedy.

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.—JOSEPH GLANVILL.

I cannot, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the Lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot *now* bring these points to mind, because, in truth, the character of my beloved, her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and the thrilling and enthralling eloquence of her low musical language, made their way into my heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been unnoticed and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family—I have surely heard her speak. That it is of a remotely ancient date cannot be doubted. Ligeia! Ligeia! Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone—by Ligeia—that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of my strength of affection, that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own—a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself—what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever that spirit which is entitled *Romance*—if ever she, the wan and the misty-winged *Ashtophet* of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine.

There is one dear topic, however, on which my memory fails me not. It is the *person* of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and, in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanor, or the incomprehensible

lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium-dream—an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the fantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. “There is no exquisite beauty,” says Bacon, Lord Verulam, speaking truly of all the forms and *genera* of beauty, “without some *strangeness* in the proportion.”¹ Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity—although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed “exquisite,” and felt that there was much of “strangeness” pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity and to trace home my own perception of “the strange.” I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead: it was faultless—how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so divine!—the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples; and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, “hyacinthine”! I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly—the magnificent turn of the short upper lip—the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under—the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke—the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin—and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the

majesty, the fullness and the spirituality, of the Greek—the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia.

For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our own race. They were even fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nour-jahad. Yet it was only at intervals—in moments of intense excitement—that this peculiarity became more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. And at such moments was her beauty—in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps—the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth, the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk. The hue of the orbs was the most brilliant of black, and, far over them, hung jetty lashes of great length. The brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same tint. The “strangeness,” however, which I found in the eyes, was of a nature distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the *expression*. Ah, word of no meaning! behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual. The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! What was it—that something more profound than the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs! they became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers.

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that, in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia’s eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart! And

¹ A favorite passage with Poe, and one that throws light upon his conception of art and literature.

(strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly-growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven—(one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books.² Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill,³ which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment;—"And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

Length of years and subsequent reflection have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connection between this passage in the English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An *intensity* in thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion

of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me—by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness, and placidity of her very low voice—and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the wild words which she habitually uttered.

I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense—such as I have never known in a woman. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern dialects of Europe, I have never known her at fault. Indeed upon any theme of the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault? How singularly—how thrillingly, this one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this late period only, upon my attention! I said her knowledge was such as I have never known in woman—but where breathes the man who has traversed, and successfully, *all* the wide areas of moral, physical, and methemathematical science? I saw not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding; yet I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied during the earlier years of our marriage. With how vast a triumph—with how vivid a delight—with how much of all that is ethereal in hope—did I *feel*, as she bent over me in studies but little sought—but less known—that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!

How poignant, then, must have been the grief with which, after some years, I beheld my well-grounded expectations take wings to themselves and fly away! Without Ligeia I was but as a child groping benighted. Her presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which we were immersed. Wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes, letters, lambent and golden, grew duller than Saturnian lead. And now those eyes shone less and less frequently upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill. The wild eyes blazed with a too-too glorious effulgence; the

² With this paragraph compare Nesace's Song from "Al Aaraaf," in which another Ligeia appears.

³ Joseph Glanvill (1636-1680) was an English clergyman and philosophical writer.

pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the grave; and the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sank impetuously with the tides of the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die—and I struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael. And the struggles of the passionate wife were, to my astonishment, even more energetic than my own. There had been much in her stern nature to impress me with the belief that, to her, death would have come without its terrors;—but not so. Words are impotent to convey any just idea of the fierceness of resistance with which she wrestled with the Shadow. I groaned in anguish at the pitiable spectacle. I would have soothed—I would have reasoned; but, in the intensity of her wild desire for life,—for life—but for life—solace and reason were alike the uttermost of folly. Yet not until the last instance, amid the most convulsive writhings of her fierce spirit, was shaken the external placidity of her demeanor. Her voice grew more gentle—grew more low—yet I would not wish to dwell upon the wild meaning of the quietly uttered words. My brain reeled as I hearkened entranced, to a melody more than mortal—to assumptions and aspirations which mortality had never before known.

That she loved me I should not have doubted; and I might have been easily aware that, in a bosom such as hers, love would have reigned no ordinary passion. But in death only, was I fully impressed with the strength of her affection. For long hours, detaining my hand, would she pour out before me the overflowing of a heart whose more than passionate devotion amounted to idolatry. How had I deserved to be so blessed by such confessions?—how had I deserved to be so cursed with the removal of my beloved in the hour of her making them? But upon this subject I cannot bear to dilate. Let me say only, that in Ligeia's more than womanly abandonment to a love, alas! all unmerited, all unworthily bestowed, I at length recognized the principle of her longing, with so wildly earnest a desire, for the life which was now fleeing so rapidly away. It is this wild longing—it is this eager vehemence of desire for life—but for life—that I have no power to portray—no utterance capable of expressing.

At high noon of the night in which she departed, beckoning me, peremptorily, to her side, she bade me repeat certain verses composed by

herself not many days before. I obeyed her.—They were these:

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 'tis a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years!
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
 In veils, and drowned in tears,
 Sit in a theatre, to see
 A play of hopes and fears,
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low,
 And hither and thither fly—
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
 At bidding of vast formless things
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
 Flapping from out their Condor wings
 Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
 It shall not be forgot!
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,
 By a crowd that seize it not,
 Through a circle that ever returneth in
 To the self-same spot,
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
 A crawling shape intrude!
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out
 The scenic solitude!
 It writhes;—it writhes! with mortal pangs
 The mimes become its food,
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
 In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
 And over each quivering form,
 The curtain, a funeral pall,
 Comes down with the rush of a storm,
 While the angels, all pallid and wan,
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm
 That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
 And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

"O God!" half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines—"O God! O Divine Father!—shall these things be undeviatingly so?—shall this Conqueror be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who—who knoweth the mysteries of the

will with its vigor? Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly*, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. And as she breathed her last sighs, there came mingled with them a low murmur from her lips. I bent to them my ear, and distinguished, again, the concluding words of the passage in Glanvill: "*Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*"

She died;—and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine. I had no lack of what the world calls wealth. Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. After a few months, therefore, of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England. The gloomy and dreary grandeur of the building, the almost savage aspect of the domain, the many melancholy and time-honored memories connected with both, had much in unison with the feelings of utter abandonment which had driven me into that remote and unsocial region of the country. Yet although the external abbey, with its verdant decay hanging about it, suffered but little alteration, I gave way with a childlike perversity, and perchance with a faint hope of alleviating my sorrows, to a display of more than regal magnificence within.—For such follies, even in childhood, I had imbibed a taste and now they came back to me as if in the dotage of grief. Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the Bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold! I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail. Let me speak only of that one chamber, ever accursed, whither in a moment of mental alienation, I led from the altar as my bride—as the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia—the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine.

There is no individual portion of the architecture and decoration of that bridal chamber which is not now visibly before me. Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment *so* bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved? I have said that I minutely remember the details of the chamber—yet I am sadly forgetful on topics of deep moment—and here there was no system, no keeping, in the fantastic display, to take hold upon the memory. The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window—an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice—a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within. Over the upper portion of this huge window extended the trellis-work of an aged vine, which clambered up the massy walls of the turret. The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting, depended, by a single chain of gold with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of parti-colored fires.

Some few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure, were in various stations about—and there was the couch, too—the bridal couch—of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a pall-like canopy above. In each of the angles of the chamber stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids full of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief phantasy of all. The lofty walls, gigantic in height—even unproportionably so—were hung from summit to foot, in vast folds, with a heavy and massive-looking tapestry—tapestry of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottomans and the ebony bed, as a canopy for the bed, and as the gorgeous volutes of the curtains which partially

shaded the window. The material was the richest cloth of gold. It was spotted all over, at irregular intervals, with arabesque figures, about a foot in diameter, and wrought upon the cloth in patterns of the most jetty black. But these figures partook of the true character of the arabesque only when regarded from a single point of view. By a contrivance now common, and indeed traceable to a very remote period of antiquity, they were made changeable in aspect. To one entering the room, they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and step by step, as the visitor moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk. The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies, giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.

In halls such as these—in a bridal chamber such as this—I passed, with the Lady of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage—passed them with but little disquietude. That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper—that she shunned me and loved me but little—I could not help perceiving; but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man. My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug) I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathway she had abandoned—ah, *could* it be forever?—upon the earth.

About the commencement of the second month of the marriage, the Lady Rowena was attacked with sudden illness, from which her recovery was slow. The fever which consumed her

rendered her nights uneasy; and in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself. She became at length convalescent—finally well. Yet but a brief period elapsed, ere a second more violent disorder again threw her upon a bed of suffering; and from this attack her frame, at all times feeble, never altogether recovered. Her illnesses were, after this epoch, of alarming character, and of more alarming recurrence, defying alike the knowledge and the great exertions of her physicians. With the increase of the chronic disease, which had thus, apparently, taken too sure hold upon her constitution to be eradicated by human means, I could not fail to observe a similar increase in the nervous irritation of her temperament, and in her excitability by trivial causes of fear. She spoke again, and now more frequently and pertinaciously, of the sounds—of the slight sounds—and of the unusual motions among the tapestries, to which she had formerly alluded.

One night, near the closing in of September, she pressed this distressing subject with more than usual emphasis upon my attention. She had just awakened from an unquiet slumber, and I had been watching, with feelings half of anxiety, half of vague terror, the workings of her emaciated countenance. I sat by the side of her ebony bed, upon one of the ottomans of India. She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear—of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. The wind was rushing hurriedly behind the tapestries, and I wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and those very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind. But a deadly pallor, overspreading her face, had proved to me that my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. She appeared to be fainting, and no attendants were within call. I remembered where was deposited a decanter of light wine which had been ordered by her physicians, and hastened across the chamber to procure it. But, as I stepped beneath the light of the censer, two circumstances of a startling nature attracted

my attention. I had felt that some palpable although invisible object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer, a shadow—a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade. But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena. Having found the wine, I recrossed the chamber, and poured out a goblet-ful, which I held to the lips of the fainting lady. She had now partially recovered, however, and took the vessel herself, while I sank upon an ottoman near me, with my eyes fastened upon her person. It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle foot-fall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby colored fluid. If this I saw—not so Rowena. She swallowed the wine unhesitatingly, and I forbore to speak to her of a circumstance which must after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the opium, and by the hour.

Yet I cannot conceal it from my own perception that, immediately subsequent to the fall of the ruby-drops, a rapid change for the worse took place in the disorder of my wife; so that, on the third subsequent night, the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb, and on the fourth, I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted shadow-like before me. I gazed with unquiet eye upon the sarcophagi in the angles of the room, upon the varying figures of the drapery, and upon the writhings of the parti-colored fires in the censer overhead. My eyes then fell, as I called to mind the circumstances of a former night, to the spot beneath the glare of the censer where I had seen the faint traces of the shadow. It was there, however, no longer; and breathing with greater freedom, I turned my glances to the pallid and rigid figure upon the bed. Then rushed upon me a thousand memories of Ligeia—and then came back upon my heart, with the

turbulent violence of a flood, the whole of that unutterable woe with which I had regarded *her* thus enshrouded. The night waned; and still, with a bosom full of bitter thoughts of the one only and supremely beloved, I remained gazing upon the body of Rowena.

It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct, startled me from my reverie.—I *felt* that it came from the bed of ebony—the bed of death. I listened in an agony of superstitious terror—but there was no repetition of the sound. I strained my vision to detect any motion in the corpse—but there was not the slightest perceptible. Yet I could not have been deceived. I *had* heard the noise, however, faint, and my soul was awakened within me. I resolutely and perseveringly kept my attention riveted upon the body. Many minutes elapsed before any circumstance occurred tending to throw light upon the mystery. At length it became evident that a slight, a very feeble, and barely noticeable tinge of color had flushed up within the cheeks, and along the sunken small veins of the eyelids. Through a species of unutterable horror and awe, for which the language of mortality has no sufficiently energetic expression, I felt my heart cease to beat, my limbs grow rigid where I sat. Yet a sense of duty finally operated to restore my self-possession. I could no longer doubt that we had been precipitate in our preparations—that Rowena still lived. It was necessary that some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and this I could not venture to do. I therefore struggled alone in my endeavors to call back the spirit still hovering. In a short period it was certain, however, that a relapse had taken place; the color disappeared from both eyelid and cheek, leaving a wanness even more than that of marble; the lips became doubly shrivelled and pinched up in the ghastly expression of death; a repulsive clamminess and coldness overspread rapidly the surface of the body; and all the usual rigorous stiffness immediately supervened. I fell back with a shudder upon the couch from which I had been so startlingly aroused, and again gave myself up to passionate waking visions of Ligeia.

An hour thus elapsed, when (could it be possible?) I was a second time aware of some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed. I listened—in extremity of horror. The sound came again—it was a sigh. Rushing to the corpse, I saw—distinctly saw—a tremor upon the lips. In a minute afterwards they relaxed, disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth. Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound awe which had hitherto reigned there alone. I felt that my vision grew dim, that my reason wandered; and it was only by a violent effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to the task which duty thus once more had pointed out. There was now a partial glow upon the forehead and upon the cheek and throat; a perceptible warmth pervaded the whole frame; there was even a slight pulsation at the heart. The lady *lived*; and with redoubled ardor I betook myself to the task of restoration. I chafed and bathed the temples and the hands, and used every exertion which experience, and no little medical reading, could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly, the color fled, the pulsation ceased, the lips resumed the expression of the dead, and, in an instant afterward, the whole body took upon itself the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline, and all the loathsome peculiarities of that which had been, for many days, a tenant of the tomb.

And again I sunk into visions of Ligeia—and again (what marvel that I shudder while I write?), *again* there reached my ears a low sob from the region of the ebony bed. But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated; how each terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death; how each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse? Let me hurry to a conclusion.

The greater part of the fearful night had worn away, and she who had been dead, once again stirred—and now more vigorously than hitherto, although arousing from a dissolution more appalling in its utter hopelessness than any. I had long ceased to struggle or to move, and remained

sitting rigidly upon the ottoman, a helpless prey to a whirl of violent emotions, of which extreme awe was perhaps the least terrible, the least consuming. The corpse, I repeat, stirred, and now more vigorously than before. The hues of life flushed up with unwonted energy into the countenance—the limbs relaxed—and, save that the eyelids were yet pressed heavily together, and that the bandages and draperies of the grave still imparted their charnel character to the figure, I might have dreamed that Rowena had indeed shaken off, utterly, the fetters of Death. But if this idea was not, even then, altogether adopted, I could at least doubt no longer, when arising from the bed, tottering, with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the thing that was enshrouded advanced bodily and palpably into the middle of the apartment.

I trembled not—I stirred not—for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanor of the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain, had paralyzed—had chilled me into stone. I stirred not—but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts—a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the *living* Rowena who confronted me? Could it indeed be Rowena *at all*—the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine? Why, *why* should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth—but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine? And the cheeks—there were the roses as in her noon of life—yes, these might indeed be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples, as in health, might it not be hers? but *had she then grown taller since her malady*? What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head, unloosened, the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and dishevelled hair; *it was blacker than the raven wings of the midnight!* And now slowly opened the *eyes* of the figure which stood before me. “Here then, at least,” I shrieked aloud, “can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the lady—of the *LADY LIGEIA!*”

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

(1839)

The setting of this story, one of Poe's finest, is reminiscent of the Gothic romances, which influenced Poe and Hawthorne after the type had ceased to be popular in England. The opening paragraph should be compared with the opening stanza of "Ulalume" and perhaps the opening chapter of Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*. The "inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple" in Roderick Usher refers to the phrenological faculty of Ideality, which is what makes one an artist—note that Usher is represented as a poet and musician. Imagine the impression made upon his imagination by his dreary surroundings.

"The Haunted Palace," first published in 1839, which purports to be one of Usher's "rhymed verbal improvisations," has a perfect setting in the tale. Its function as an integral part of the short story is to suggest "a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne." Poe, in writing to Griswold, said: "By 'The Haunted Palace' I mean to imply a mind haunted by phantoms—a disordered brain."

Can you find in the opening paragraph a phrase which adequately describes the "effect" of the story? For an analysis of this story, see James Weber Linn and Houghton Wells Taylor, *A Foreword to Fiction* (1935), Chapter XII, "A Short Story: 'The Fall of the House of Usher.'"

Son cœur est un luth suspendu;

Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.¹

DE BÉRANGER.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges

—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate, its capacity for sorrowful expression; and acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder which oppressed him—and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent heart that went with its request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly

¹ "His heart is a lute hung up; as soon as it is touched, it resounds."

obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission from sire to son of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment—that of looking down within the tarn—had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe

that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute *fungi* overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the *studio* of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I

thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortable, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these

features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence—an inconsistency: and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy—an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance—which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him

a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I must perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition—I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be restated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the *physique* of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the *morale* of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness—indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution—of a tenderly beloved sister—his sole companion for long years—his last and only relative on earth. "Her decease," he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, "would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers." While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread—and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother—but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive

that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physician. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent, although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed, but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vagueness at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why,—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within

the compass of merely written words By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least—in the circumstances then surrounding me—there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvass, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible, yet a flood of intense rays flooded throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances But the fervid facility of his *impromptus* could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness, on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace," ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:

THE HAUNTED PALACE

I

*In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!*

II

*Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.*

III

*Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene!²
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.*

IV

*And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.*

V

*But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.*

² Born to the purple, royal born.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
 Through the red-litten windows see
 Vast forms that move fantastically
 To a discordant melody,
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,
 Through the pale door
 A hideous throng rush out forever,
 And laugh—but smile no more

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad, led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men³ have thought thus), as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones—in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many *fungi* which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—the evidence of the sentience—was to be seen, he said (and I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the

³ Watson, Dr Percival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of Landaff.—See *Chemical Essays*, vol. v. (Author's note.)

Ververt et Chartreuse of Gresset; the *Belphegor* of Machiavelli, the *Heaven and Hell* of Swedenborg, the *Subterranean Voyage* of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg, the *Chiromancy* of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambré, the *Journey into the Blue Distance* of Tieck, and the *City of the Sun* of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorium* by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ*.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when one evening, having informed me abruptly that the Lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight (previously to its final interment), in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst pur-

poses of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound.

It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the Lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch—while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much if not all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame, and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, harkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped, with a gentle touch, at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained *hysteria* in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

“And you have not seen it?” he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—“you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.” Thus speaking, and having

carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity, for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind, and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this—yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars—nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

"You must not—you shall not behold this!" said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence from the window to a seat. "These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement;—the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen,—and so we will pass away this terrible night together."

The antique volume which I had taken up was the *Mad Trist* of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he harkened, or apparently harkened, to

the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the *Trist*, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

"And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and malicious turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand, and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest."

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment paused, for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that from some very remote portion of the mansion there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story.

"But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver, and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—

*Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win;*

and Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard "

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement—for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question, although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber, and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded.

"And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valourously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the

silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound "

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangorous yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips, and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words

"Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!*" Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I *dared not speak!* And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield!—say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh, whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? *Madman!*"—here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—"Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!"

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell—the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the Lady Madeline of Usher

There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued, for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof to the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "HOUSE OF USHER."

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1842)

This is a story in which the setting seems more important than either the characters or the action. The "effect" is suggested by a phrase in the opening paragraph—"the redness and the horror of blood." Note the emphasis upon the pictorial throughout. For an excellent analysis of this tale, see Walter Blair, "Poe's Conception of Incident and Tone in the Tale," *Modern Philology*, XLI, 228-240 (May, 1944).

The "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim, were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure,

progress, and termination of the disease, were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers, and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven—an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different, as might have been expected from the prince's love of the *bizarre*. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That

at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue—and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange—the fifth with white—the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood color. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the firelight that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and, when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to harken to the sound, and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie or meditation. But when the echoes had fully

ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly, the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand six hundred seconds of the Time that flies), there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the prince were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the moveable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*, and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm—much of what has been since seen in *Hernani*.¹ There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the *bizarre*, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these—the dreams—writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away—they have endured but an instant—and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many-tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which

¹ A play by Victor Hugo.

lies most westwardly of the seven there are now none of the maskers who venture, for the night is waning away, and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appals, and, to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches their ears who indulged in the more remote gayeties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told, and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock, and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtlul among those who revelled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure who had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited, but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble

the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revelers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of his face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment, with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste, but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

"Who dares?"—he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him—"who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him—that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise from the battlements!"

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly—for the prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumption of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the prince's person; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice,

rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry—and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave-cerements and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

(1846)

This essay is perhaps the most remarkable analysis of a poem ever written. It is, however, not to be taken literally. "The Raven" had proved an extraordinarily popular poem. Everywhere he went Poe was asked how he wrote the poem. His answer is in a sense a feature story. It was first published in *Graham's Magazine* for April, 1846, something over a year after "The Raven." The author of a best-seller today has more chances to capitalize on a successful piece of writing than Poe had, but, like a born journalist, he made the most of what opportunities he had. Hervey Allen, a poet as well as Poe's biographer, writes:

"Poe's own explanation of how the poem was concocted . . . is, in the final analysis, not an explanation at all. It was simply his own effort to rationalize upon, and to make apparently logical to himself, his own creative processes. This critical

essay was part of his attempt to project himself as the almighty reasoner, as it was also part of his propaganda for making *The Raven* popular. People asked him the question, 'Mr. Poe, how did you write *The Raven*?' The essay is a perfectly reasonable reply. Instead of falling back on the old theory of mysterious and divine inspiration, which has ever been the poet's method of dodging self-analysis, Poe, by his reply, not only silenced the Philistines but also added to his reputation as a logical genius.

"There is this, however, to be said. The long period over which the composition of *The Raven* stretched, a period of four years at least, shows that, into the arrangement and composition of it, went a great deal of critical thinking, artistic analysis, a logical arrangement of effects, and a painstaking construction of the spinal narrative which no mere emotion could have provided."

Several things prevent one from accepting Poe's account completely. He makes no reference to the works of other writers which almost certainly influenced him. Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, Mrs. Brownning's "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," the poems of Thomas Holley Chivers, etc. One notes, too, that in Poe's earlier poems appears his favorite topic, the death of a beautiful woman. Earlier poems conform also to his ideas of the proper length of a poem. These conceptions at least were not first worked out in "The Raven."

Other accounts of how poems are written stress a matter which Poe never mentions—the part played by the subconscious mind. The curious student should consult Marguerite Wilkinson's *The Way of the Makers* and *New Voices* (which includes a section on "How Poems are Made"), Mary Austin's *Everyman's Genius*, F. C. Prescott's *The Poetic Mind*, Conrad Aiken's "The Mechanism of Poetic Inspiration" (in his *Scepticisms*), Wilbur L. Cross, "The Act of Composition," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1906, and Lane Cooper's *Methods and Aims in the Study of Literature* (Section IV). In a suggestive little volume *On English Poetry* (Chap. XVIII) the English poet Robert Graves has tried to point out the experiences which underlie one of his own poems, "The General Elliott."

Poe's lecture, "The Poetic Principle," not included in this anthology, throws further light upon his conception of poetry. Note the following extracts:

"... I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth."

" . . a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral, and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea, and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force—but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified—more supremely noble than this very poem—this poem *per se*—this poem which is a poem and nothing more—this poem written solely for the poem's sake."

"We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven—in the volutes of the flower—in the clustering of low shrubberies—in the waving of the grain-fields—in the slanting of tall, Eastern trees—in the blue distance of mountains—in the grouping of clouds—in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks—in the gleaming of silver rivers—in the repose of sequestered lakes—in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds—in the harp of Aeolus—in the sighing of the night-wind—in the repining voice of the forest—in the surf that complains to the shore—in the fresh breath of the woods—in the scent of the violet—in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth—in the suggestive odour that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts—in all unworldly motives—in all holy impulses—in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman—in the grace of her step—in the lustre of her eye—in the melody of her voice—in her soft laughter—in her sigh—in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments—in her burning enthusiasms—in her gentle charities—in her meek and devotional endurances—but above all—ah, far above all—he kneels to it—he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her love."

Charles Dickens, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "*Barnaby Rudge*,"¹ says—"By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his '*Caleb Williams*' backwards?² He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges,³ is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea—but the author of "*Caleb Williams*" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.⁴

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

¹ Note that Poe makes no mention of the raven in Dickens's novel which perhaps is the real starting point for "*The Raven*."

² The last stanza of Wordsworth's "*We are Seven*" was written first, and the first stanza, composed by Coleridge, was written last.

³ In his preface William Godwin says: ". . . I invented first the third volume of my tale, then the second, and last of all the first."

⁴ Cf. Robert Louis Stevenson, writing to a friend who had suggested changing the conclusion of one of his short stories: "To make another end, that is to make the beginning all wrong . . . the body and end of a short-story is bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the beginning" (*Vailima Letters*, I, 147).

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place,—“Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?” Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought, at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrive not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock’s feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrion*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy

with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select “The Raven,” as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem⁵

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.⁶

We commence, then, with this intention

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *anything* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the “Paradise Lost” is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements

⁵ This gives the clue to the “effect” which Poe aimed at in this essay.

⁶ “The Raven” and Gray’s “Elegy” are among the few poems in English which “suit at once the popular and the critical taste.” Knowing that until the publication of “The Raven,” Poe’s criticisms and stories were better known than his poems, one may well doubt any expectation on his part that “The Raven” would be popular.

interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.⁷

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as “Robinson Crusoe” (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.⁸

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed, and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I

⁷ For an effective reply to Poe's contention in regard to *Paradise Lost*, see Henry Timrod, “A Theory of Poetry,” *Atlantic Monthly*, XCVI, 313-326 (September, 1905).

⁸ In his life of Bryant (I, 186 n) Parke Godwin quotes John Bigelow as saying: “Bryant never wrote any long poems. I once asked him why. He replied: ‘There is no such thing as a long poem.’ His theory was that a long poem was as impossible as a long ecstasy; that what is called a long poem, like ‘Paradise Lost’ and the ‘Divine Comedy,’ is a mere succession of poems strung together upon a thread of verse, the thread of verse serving sometimes to popularize them to a wider range of literary taste or a more sluggish intellectual digestion.”

mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul*—not of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating “the beautiful.” Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*.⁹ Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears.

⁹ Cf Shelley's “To a Skylark”:

“Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought”

Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*.¹⁰ The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought. That is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the application of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the nature of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the character of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary; the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations, inevitably led me to

the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.¹¹

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "never more." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a human being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non-reasoning* creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended tone.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*." The death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the

¹⁰ See C. Alphonso Smith, *Repetition and Parallelism in English Verse*.

¹¹ Poe was brought up in Virginia. Is the Southern *r* "the most producible consonant"?

lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."¹²

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore."—I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying at every turn the application of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the variation of application. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore"—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so molding his questions as to receive from the expected "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Preceiving the opportunity this afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the uttermost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

¹² Do the great elegies bear out Poe's contention? Cf. Milton's "Lycidas," Shelley's "Adonais," Tennyson's "In Memoriam," Arnold's "Thyrsis," Emerson's "Threnody," and Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if
bird or devil!"

By that heaven that bends above us—by that God
we both adore,

Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the
distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore"

Quoth the Raven "Nevermore"

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.¹³

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing. The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

¹³ Do you find this credible? If not, look up the lines which Thomas Gray finally omitted from his "Elegy" because to include them would spoil the symmetry of the poem.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short. the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth of the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their *combination into stanza*, nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident—it has the force of a frame to a picture¹⁴ It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the

wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in the wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

*Not the least obeisance made he—not a moment stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.*

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out—

*Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,"
I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."*

*Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—*

¹⁴ "There are few principles of greater importance than the one Poe here so casually announces" (Margaret Alterton and Hardin Craig, *Edgar Allan Poe*, 1935, p. 538).

*Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,*

With such name as "Nevermore"

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness — this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

*But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust,
spoke only, etc*

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*—which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but

is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation, and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering thus the upper instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

*"Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy
form from off my door!"*

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical¹⁵—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance*¹⁶ is permitted distinctly to be seen:

¹⁵ Symbolic.

¹⁶ Is this a good statement of the "effect" aimed at in "The Raven"?

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still
is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my
chamber door,
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that
is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor,
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating
on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore ¹⁷

NESACE'S SONG

from AL AARAAF

(1829)

This passage is the second of the songs of Nesace (accented on the first syllable) in Poe's long and formless "Al Aaraaf." That poem constituted a large part of Poe's second volume of verse, published in 1829, when he was only twenty years old. Nothing in his 1827 volume had great merit, but the song given below is one of the finest lyrics he ever wrote.

Al Aaraaf (variously spelled) is the name given by Mohammedans to the abode of departed spirits which is intermediate between Heaven and Hell. Poe's interest in Mohammedan mythology had probably been aroused by the poems of Byron and Moore dealing with the Near East. "The central idea of the poem," says Killis Campbell, "seems to be the divineness of beauty—a happy anticipation of Lanier's doctrine of the 'holiness of beauty'." The song is Nesace's call to her attendant spirits, of whom Ligeia is one. (Note the recurrence of the name in his famous short story.) In his edition of Poe's poems, J. H. Whitty calls attention to a passage in Lowell's article on Poe in *Graham's Magazine* for February, 1845—a passage which Poe may have seen and was probably largely responsible for. "In a poem named 'Ligeia' . . . he [Poe] intended to personify the music of nature, . . ."

In 1845 Poe read "Al Aaraaf" before the Boston Lyceum in lieu of a poem he had planned to write for this special occasion. The Boston papers gave rather unfavorable notices of the affair, but one listener, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of the most interesting minor New England writers, was greatly impressed by Poe's reading of Nesace's song.

¹⁷ Note that if Poe's argument is sound and if there has been no flaw in his execution, "The Raven" is the greatest poem in the language. Do you suppose Poe was conscious of this corollary to his main proposition?

See his *Short Studies of American Authors*. The following briefer account is taken from Higginson and Boynton's *Reader's History of American Literature*.

"The verses had long been printed in his youthful volume . . . and they produced no very distinct impression until Poe began to read the maiden's song in the second part. Already his tones had been softening to a finer melody than at first, and when he came to the verses,—

'Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!"

his voice seemed attenuated to the faintest golden thread, the audience became hushed, and, as it were, breathless; there seemed no life in the hall but his, and every syllable was accentuated with such delicacy, and sustained with such sweetness, as I never heard equaled by other lips. When the lyric ended, it was like the ceasing of the gypsy's chant in Browning's 'Flight of the Duchess', and I remember nothing more, except that in walking back to Cambridge my comrades and I felt that we had been under the spell of some wizard. Indeed, I feel much the same in the retrospect, to this day."

"'Neath blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps from the dreamer
The moonbeam away—
Bright beings, that ponder
With half closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeching
These star-litten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber'd with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too
(O, how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)—
Those kisses of true love
That lull'd ye to rest!
Up!—shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;

And true love caresses—
O! leave them apart
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

“Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,¹
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

“Ligeia! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
Which *thy* vigilance keep:
The sound of the rain
Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower—
The murmur that springs
From the growing grass²
Are the music of things—
But are modell’d, alas!—
Away, then, my dearest,
O! hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping

¹ The albatross is said to sleep on the wing (Poe’s note.)

² I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain and quote from memory:—“The verie essence and, as it were, springe-head, and origine of all musiche is the very pleasante sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they grow.” (Poe’s note.)

Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee³—
Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea—

5

Go! breathe on their slumber,⁴
All softly in ear,
The musical number
They slumber’d to hear—
For what can awaken
An angel so soon,
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
15 As the spell which no slumber
Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
Which lull’d him to rest?”

20

TO HELEN

(1831)

This poem, so Poe said, was addressed to the mother of a Richmond schoolmate, Mrs. Jane Stith Starnard, who had been kind to him. Her death in 1824 made an abiding impression on the fifteen-year-old boy. Poe’s story that the poem was composed when he was only fourteen is not credible. The lady was still living at that time. Besides, if the poem had been written then, he would doubtless have included it in his earlier volume of poems.

30 The poem has been highly—and deservedly—praised. Lowell, who contributed to *Graham’s Magazine* an article on Poe, quotes the poem and comments: “There is a little dimness in the filling up, but the grace and symmetry of the outline are such as few poets ever attain. There is a smack of ambrosia about it. . . . All is lumpid and serene, with a pleasant dash of the Greek Helicon in it. The melody of the whole, too, is remarkable. . . . It seems simple, like a Greek column, because of its perfection.”

40 Readers often overlook the fact that Poe’s doctrine of the single effect is applicable to his poems as well as his stories. In “To Helen” the now hackneyed phrase, “thy classic face,” suggests the effect at which he aimed.

Lines 9-10 read originally:

45 “To the beauty of fair Greece
And the grandeur of old Rome”

³ The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight. . . (Poe’s note)

⁴ Compare the preceding paragraph with the next to the last paragraph of Poe’s lecture “The Poetic Principle,” in which he enumerates “a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet the true poetical effect.”

Scholars have made various conjectures as to the meaning of "Nicéan" in the second line, which is perhaps reminiscent of Coleridge's line in "Youth and Age":

"Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore"

"Nicéan" has been thought to refer to Nice in southern France or to Nicæa in Asia Minor. As plausible as any is William Michael Rossetti's contention that Poe derived the word from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, lines 275 ff.:

" that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea and her florid son
Young Bacchus from her stepdame Rhea's eye; . . ."

"The weary, way-worn wanderer" is perhaps Bacchus or Ulysses

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy-Land!

ISRAFEL

(1831)

In 1831, when he first printed the poem, Poe added the following note, ascribing it to the Koran: "And the angel Israfil who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures." In 1845 the note read: "And the angel Israfil, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—KORAN." The quotation comes from George Sale's "Preliminary Discourse" to his translation of the *Koran*: "The angel Israfil, who has the most melodious voice of all God's creatures." Poe has not only quoted carelessly; he has ascribed to the *Koran* a line from his poem. In their *Introduction to American Poetry* Professors Prescott and Sanders comment: "If his [Poe's] procedure now seems disingenuous, it should be remembered that he was a hard-working

journalist, less concerned with scholarly scruples than with impressing the unscholarly readers of his magazine." The line, "Whose heart-strings are a lute," seems an echo of the following lines by Béranger which he used as a motto for "The Fall of the House of Usher":

"Son cœur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche, il résonne."

"Israfil" should be compared with other Romantic poems of aspiration such as Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" and Shelley's "To a Skylark," of which the concluding stanza reads:

'Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then—as
I am listening now'

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
"Whose heart-strings are a lute";
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfil,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven,)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfil's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Hours glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
Israfil, who despisest

An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervour of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine, but this
Is a world of sweets and sour;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might
swell
From my lyre within the sky.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

(1831)

This poem seems to have had its beginning in the opening lines of the second part of "Al Aaraaf," in which at one time appeared the following passage:

*"Far down within the crystal of the lake
Thy swollen pillars tremble—and so quake
The hearts of many wanderers who look in
Thy luridness of beauty—and of sin"*

The poem underwent several changes of title: "The Doomed City," "The City of Sin," "The City in the Sea." This poem is one of the most original that Poe wrote, and yet it owes much to other poets, to the Bible, and to stories of sunken cities. (See the notes in Kilis Campbell's edition of the poems, and Louise Pound, "On Poe's 'The City in the Sea,'" *American Literature*, VI, 22-27, March, 1934) Professor Campbell comments: "That Poe's conception in *The City in the Sea* is that of the wicked dead is indicated by the atmosphere of gloom which pervades the 'doomed city,' and is plainly implied in the closing lines of the poem and in the title adopted in 1836—*The City of Sin*. . . the situation with which the poet has to do here is that of the 'City of Death' (which he identifies symbolically, as did Isaiah and the apostle John, with the city of Babylon), and in particular with this city shortly before the last judgment."

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst
5 and the best

Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours
10 Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
15 On the long night-time of that town,
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free:
Up domes—up spires—up kingly walls—
20 Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
25 The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
30 That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
35 Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead,
Tempt the waters from their bed;
40 For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
15 On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
50 In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.

The waves have now a redder glow—
 The hours are breathing faint and low—
 And when, amid no earthly moans,
 Down, down that town shall settle hence,
 Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
 Shall do it reverence.

THE SLEEPER

(1831)

Poe wrote of this poem "In the higher qualities of poetry it is better than 'The Raven,' but there is not one man in a million who could be brought to agree with me in this opinion. 'The Raven,' of course, is far the better as a work of art; but in the true basis of all art, 'The Sleeper' is the superior." "The Sleeper" is one of a number of Poe's poems that deal with what seemed to him the best subject for a poem. Cf. "The Philosophy of Composition." " . . . the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover." Many of his poems have been thought to refer to his wife Virginia. One should remember, however, that the poems on this subject were written while Virginia was still a child ("Tamerlane," for example), while the two were happily married, while she was an invalid, and after her death.

At midnight, in the month of June,
 I stand beneath the mystic moon.
 An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
 Exhales from out her golden rim,
 And softly dripping, drop by drop,
 Upon the quiet mountain top,
 Steals drowsily and musically
 Into the universal valley.
 The rosemary nods upon the grave;
 The lily lolls upon the wave;
 Wrapping the fog about its breast,
 The ruin moulders into rest;
 Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
 A conscious slumber seems to take,
 And would not, for the world, awake.
 All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
 Irené, with her Destinies!

O lady bright! can it be right—
 This window open to the night?
 The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
 Laughingly through the lattice drop—
 The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
 Flit through thy chamber in and out,
 And wave the curtain canopy

So fitfully—so fearfully—
 Above the closed and fringed lid
 'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
 That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
 Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!

Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
 Why and what art thou dreaming here?
 Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
 A wonder to these garden trees!
 Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
 Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
 And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh! may her sleep,
 Which is enduring, so be deep!
 Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
 This chamber changed for one more holy,
 This bed for one more melancholy
 I pray to God that she may lie
 Forever with unopened eye,
 While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
 As it is lasting, so be deep!
 Soft may the worms about her creep!
 Far in the forest, dim and old,
 For her may some tall vault unfold—
 Some vault that oft hath flung its black
 And winged panels fluttering back,
 Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
 Of her grand family funerals—

Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
 Against whose portal she hath thrown,
 In childhood many and idle stone—
 Some tomb from out whose sounding door
 She ne'er shall force an echo more,
 Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
 It was the dead who groaned within.

TO ONE IN PARADISE

(1834)

Thou wast that all to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine—
 A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine,
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
 Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise

But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more—no more—no more
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances
By what eternal streams.

HYMN

(1835)

This poem, which at one time bore the title
"Catholic Hymn," appeared originally as a part of
the story "Morella," in the *Southern Literary Mes-*
senger in April, 1835.

At morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and wo—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

DREAM-LAND

(1844)

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon,¹ named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

¹ Image; phantom.

5 Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore,
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
10 Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their still waters, still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

15 By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
20 By the grey woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
25 In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets, aghast,
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
30 White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
35 For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it;
Never its mysteries are exposed
40 To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

45 By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
50 I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

THE RAVEN

(1845)

"The Raven" should be studied in the light of Poe's comments in "The Philosophy of Composition" Poe, however, does not tell us the whole story of the genesis of that poem The raven was probably suggested to Poe by the pet raven, "Grip," in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*. In reviewing the novel, Poe had noted a lost opportunity on Dickens's part: "Its croakings might have been *prophetically* heard in the course of the drama Its character might have performed, in regard to that of the idiot, much the same part as does, in music, the accompaniment in respect to the air" The poem owes something, too, to a poem of Mrs Browning, to whom Poe was soon to dedicate *The Raven and Other Poems* (1845). Her "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" may have suggested the metrical form. Note the following stanza

*"Eyes," he said, "now throbbing through me' are ye eyes that did undo me?
Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone'
Underneath that calm white forehead are ye ever burning torrid
O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and life undone?"*

Cf. also her line,

"With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air the purple curtain,"

with Poe's,

"And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain."

For Poe's possible indebtedness to other poets, see the notes in Killis Campbell's edition of the poems Note the similarity between certain poems of Poe and those of Thomas Holley Chivers

"The Raven" was Poe's first poem that had anything like a popular vogue, and it is still his best-known poem. Critics, however, have usually preferred one of the less-known poems, and have objected to a certain artificiality, a smell of the midnight oil about the poem In his *Recollections*, the British novelist, Hall Caine, quotes Dante Gabriel Rossetti as saying that "The Raven" inspired the latter's "The Blessed Damsel." Rossetti said. "I saw that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and I determined to reverse the condition, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven."

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
" 'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door— 5
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow 10
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain 15
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
 "'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
 Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
 This it is and nothing more."

5

Presently my soul grew stronger, hesitating then no longer,
 "Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
 But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
 And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
 10 That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
 Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
 Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before,
 15 But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
 And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"
 Merely this and nothing more.

20 Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
 "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
 Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—
 25 'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
 30 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 35 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore "

40

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
 45 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
 50 Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
 Till I scarcely more than muttered,—“Other friends have flown before—
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”
 Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
 Of 'Never—nevermore' "

5

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore "

10

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
 She shall press, ah, nevermore!

20

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
 Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.¹
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
 Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

25

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
 Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore "

30

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!
 By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore—
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

35

40

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—
 "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore "

45

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;

50

¹ W. C. Brownell remarks in *American Prose Masters*. "Tinkling feet on a tufted carpet is nonsense, but it is not a false note in the verbal harmony of the artificial 'Raven.' "

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
 And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;²
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!

ULALUME—A BALLAD

(1847)

Commentators and critics have disagreed concerning the meaning and the intrinsic merits of "Ulalume." Theodore Watts-Dunton, in his well-known article on Poetry in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (eleventh edition) suggests

"The poet's object in that remarkable *tour de force* was to express dull and hopeless gloom in the same way that the mere musician would have expressed it—that it to say, by monotonous reiterations, by hollow and dreadful reverberations of gloomy sounds—though as an artist whose vehicle was articulate speech he was obliged to add gloomy ideas, in order to give to his work the intellectual coherence necessary for its existence as a poem."

In an essay on "Poe's 'Ulalume'" (in his *Sidelights on American Literature*) Fred Lewis Pattee sums up his interpretation

"'Ulalume' is the epitome of Poe's last years. It is the picture of a soul hovering between hope and inevitable despair, a soul longing passionately for a sympathy which it can never have, a soul struggling toward the light yet beaten back at every point, a soul that realized as few other souls ever have the supernal beauty which is possible in human life, yet condemned like Tantalus never to share its joys."

Edwin Markham thinks that the poem "chronicles in symbol the collision between an ignoble passion and the memory of an ideal love." Professor Pattee sees in the poem not only the death of Virginia Poe but also the poet's love for Mrs. Shew, who was not willing to marry him

"The poem," Professor Campbell points out, "belongs to the well-known and ancient narrative *genre* of the dialogue (or debate) between the body and the soul." Cf. Walt Whitman's "Darest thou now,

O Soul" and Poe's short story, "William Wilson." "The Psyche," says J. M. Robertson in an excellent critical essay on Poe (in *New Essays toward a Critical Method*), "is the obscure whisper of the tired heart, the suspended memory, that will not be wholly appeased with the beauty of the night and the stars, and the poet has but cast into a mystical dialogue the interplay of the waking and the half-sleeping sense, which goes on till the cypress, some symbol of the grave, flashes its deadly message on the shrinking soul, and grief leaps into full supremacy."

Note the onomatopoeic value of the "myth-names" *Auber, Weir, Yaanek*.

The skies they were ashen and sober;
 The leaves they were crispèd and sere—
 The leaves they were withering and sere:
 It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year:
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir—
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
 These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriac rivers that roll—
 As the lavas that restlessly roll
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
 In the ultimate climes of the pole—
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the Boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
 Our memories were treacherous and sere,

² To those who wondered how the lamp could throw the raven's shadow on the floor, Poe replied that for poetic purposes "it is quite sufficient that a thing is possible, or at least that its improbability be not offensively glaring." He went on to explain that he had thought of the light as coming from a "bracket candelabrum affixed against the wall, high up above the door and bust, as is often seen in the English palaces, and even in some of the better houses of New York." Instead of making this rather lame defense, would not Poe have done better to follow Goethe's method in defending Rubens for making the shadows in one of his pictures fall in two directions? "The double light," said Goethe to Eckermann, "is certainly audacious, and you can always say that it's contrary to nature. But if it is contrary to nature, then I say along with that, that it is higher than nature; I say it is the daring touch of a master, through which he makes clear, that art is not wholly subject to physical necessity, but has its own laws." See the discussion of this point in John Livingston Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry*, pp. 36-39.

For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)—
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber
 (Though once we had journeyed down 5
 here)—

We remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
 And star-dials pointed to morn—
 As the star-dials hinted of morn—
 At the end of our path a liquescent
 And nebulous lustre was born,
 Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn—
 Astarte's¹ bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said "She is warmer than Dian;
 She rolls through an ether of sighs—
 She revels in a region of sighs.
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
 And has come past the stars of the Lion,
 To point us the path to the skies—
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes "

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said: "Sadly this star I mistrust—
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust:
 Ah, hasten!—ah, let us not linger!
 Ah, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings till they trailed in the dust—
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied. "This is nothing but dreaming:
 Let us on by this tremulous light!
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
 Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
 Seel—it flickers up the sky through the night!

¹ Astarte was a Phœnician goddess of the moon. She was also, unlike the Roman Diana, the goddess of love. In Poe's "Eulalie"—and perhaps here also—Astarte is the planet Venus.

Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright—
 We surely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright,
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the
 night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom—
 10 And conquered her scruples and gloom;
 And we passed to the end of the vista,
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
 By the door of a legended tomb;
 And I said. "What is written, sweet sister,
 15 On the door of this legended tomb?"
 She replied: "Ulalume—Ulalume!—
 'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
 20 As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
 As the leaves that were withering and sere;
 And I cried. "It was surely October
 On *this* very night of last year
 That I journeyed—I journeyed down here!—
 25 That I brought a dread burden down here—
 On this night of all nights in the year,
 Ah, what demon hath tempted me here?
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
 This misty mid region of Weir—
 30 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir "

Said we, then—the two, then: "Ah, can it
 Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
 35 The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
 To bar up our way and to ban it
 From the secret that lies in these wolds—
 From the thing that lies hidden in these
 wolds—
 40 Have drawn up the spectre of a planet
 From the limbo of lunar souls—
 This sinfully scintillant planet
 From the Hell of the planetary souls?"²

THE BELLS

(1849)

"The Bells"—partly because its subject matter is comparatively slight—has often been regarded as a *tour de force* rather than a genuine poem. An analysis of the poem, however, throws light upon

² The last stanza does not appear in all versions of "Ulalume."

Poe's technical virtuosity There are two early versions of the poem (both given in J H Whitty's edition of the poems), one of which runs as follows:

THE BELLS—A SONG

*The bells!—hear the bells!
The merry wedding bells!
The little silver bells!
How fairy-like a melody there swells
From the silver tinkling cells
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the Bells!*

*The bells!—ah, the bells!
The heavy iron bells!
Hear the tolling of the bells!
Hear the knells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
From their deep-toned throats!
How I shudder at the notes
From the melancholy throats
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the Bells!*

In form "The Bells" belongs to a not uncommon English type, the irregular rimed poem Examples are Dryden's "Alexander's Feast," Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," Robinson's "The Man against the Sky," Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo," and Poe's "Israfel" In a notable article on Poetry found in older editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Theodore Watts-Dunton explains the principle underlying the apparent lawlessness of such poems

"In modern prosody the arrangement of the rhymes and the length of the lines in any rhymed metrical passage may be determined either by a fixed stanzaic law, or by a law infinitely deeper—by the law which impels the soul, in a state of poetic exaltation, to seize hold of every kind of metrical aid, such as rhyme, cæsura, etc., for the purpose of accentuating and marking off each shade of emotion as it arises, regardless of any demands of stanza . . . In the regular metres we enjoy the pleasure of feeling that the rhymes will inevitably fall under a recognized law of couplet or stanza But if the passage flows independently of these, it must still flow inevitably—it must, in short, show that it is governed by another and a yet deeper force, the inevitableness of emotional expression."

(Note that Watts-Dunton's argument applies as well to free verse as to poems in rime.)

"The Bells," like Victor Hugo's "Les Djinns" and Southey's "How the Water Comes down at Lodore," is an extended exercise in onomatopœia. Pope's line,

The sound must seem an echo to the sense,

will serve to suggest the meaning of this technical term Two excellent examples are to be found in Milton's descriptions of the opening of the gates of Hell and of Heaven.

*"On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus."*

*"Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit coming to create new worlds."*

It would be somewhat easier to study the sound pattern of "The Bells" if one could print in parallel columns the four divisions—they are not stanzas—of the poem. Note how skillfully Poe has chosen his words for sound and suggestive quality in the closing lines of each division:

From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells

To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells

In the clamor and the clanging of the bells

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells

Similarly, one may compare the three opening lines of each division Poe's favorite consonant and vowel sounds are seen in the names he uses. *Lenore*, *Helen*, *Eleanora*, *Ligeia*, *Annabel Lee*, etc He is, like most other poets, fond of the liquids, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, and of long *e* and *o* In the first division of the poem, note the predominance of the short *e* and short *i* not only in the rime words but in the middle of the line (where it is called assonance) Other vowel sounds are introduced to prevent monotony The longer vowel sounds predominate in the second division, and in the fourth, long *o*'s and long *u*'s In the third division the rather harsh and hissing sounds—*t*, *s*, *sh*, etc.—are perhaps intended to suggest the hissing sound of the fire and the clanging of fire-bells. (See W. L. Werner, "Poe's Theories and Practice in Poetic Technique," *American Literature*, II, 157-165.)

I

Hear the sledges with the bells—

Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

5

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight;

Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells— 5
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells—
Golden bells! 10
What a world of happiness their harmony
foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!—
From the molten-golden notes, 15
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells, 20
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the Future!—how it tells
Of the rapture that impels 25
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells! 30

III

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency 35
tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek, 40
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the
fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and
frantic fire, 45
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon. 50
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!

How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear, it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking of the swelling in the anger of
the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody
compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan
And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls.—
And their king it is who tolls:—
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells:—
Of the bells:—
Keeping time, time, time
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—

Of the bells, bells, bells—
 To the sobbing of the bells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,
 In a happy Runic rhyme,
 To the rolling of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells —
 To the tolling of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells— 10
 To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

ELDORADO

(1849)

"Like the tale *Von Kempelen and his Discovery*, 15
 it ["Eldorado"] is a product of the 'gold-excitement'
 of '49 and one of many evidences of Poe's interest
 in contemporary matters" (Killis Campbell).

Gaily bedight, 20
 A gallant knight,
 In sunshine and in shadow,
 Had journeyed long,
 Singing a song,
 In search of Eldorado. 25

But he grew old—
 This knight so bold—
 And o'er his heart a shadow
 Fell as he found 30
 No spot of ground
 That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
 Failed him at length, 35
 He met a pilgrim shadow—
 "Shadow," said he
 "Where can it be—
 This land of Eldorado?" 40

"Over the Mountains
 Of the Moon,
 Down the Valley of the Shadow,
 Ride, boldly ride," 45
 The shade replied,—
 "If you seek for Eldorado "

FOR ANNIE

(1849)

"Annie" was Mrs. Annie Richmond of Lowell, 50
 Mass., to whom Poe wrote March 23, 1849: "I think
 the lines 'For Annie' (those I now send) much the

best I have ever written, but an author can seldom
 depend on his own estimate of his own works, . " .
 In 1875, when at last a monument was erected over
 Poe's grave in Baltimore, Longfellow suggested that
 the two last lines in the first stanza be inscribed on
 the monument,

Thank Heaven! the crisis,
 The danger, is past,
 And the lingering illness
 Is over at last—
 And the fever called "Living"
 Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
 I am shorn of my strength,
 And no muscle I move
 As I lie at full length—
 But no matter!—I feel
 I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly
 Now, in my bed,
 That any beholder
 Might fancy me dead—
 Might start at beholding me,
 Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
 The sighing and sobbing,
 Are quieted now,
 With that horrible throbbing
 At heart.—ah, that horrible,
 Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—
 The pitiless pain—
 Have ceased, with the fever
 That maddened my brain—
 With the fever called "Living"
 That burned in my brain. 40

And oh! of all tortures
 That torture the worst
 Has abated—the terrible
 Torture of thirst
 For the naphthaline river
 Of Passion accurst:—
 I have drank of a water
 That quenches all thirst:—

Of a water that flows,
 With a lullaby sound,

From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed;
For a man never slept
In a different bed—
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
Regretting, its roses—
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
Commungled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.¹

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—

To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love),
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed
(With her love at my breast),
That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead —

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It grows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

ANNABEL LEE

(1849)

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee —
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me

She was a child and *I* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than
love—
I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud by night
Chilling my Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen¹ came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me—

¹ The angels.

¹ Compare Ophelia's words in *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene v: "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. pray you, love, remember. and there is pansies, that's for thoughts."

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE-----1830-1870

Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling
 And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
 And neither the angels in Heaven above
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee —

For the moon never beams without bringing me
 dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise but I see the bright
 eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the
 side

5 Of my darling, my darling, my life and my
 bride,
 In her sepulchre there by the sea—
 In her tomb by the side of the sea.²

10 ² Professor Campbell comments "In a few in-
 stances it would seem that Poe gave up an accept-
 able reading for an inferior one. This happens,
 obviously, with his substitution of the colorless
 phrase 'by the side of the sea' for the finely resonant
 ending 'by the sounding sea' in the last line of
 15 *Annabel Lee*,
 In her tomb by the sounding sea."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809 - 1865

*A blend of mirth and sadness, smiles and tears;
 A quaint knight-errant of the pioneers;
 A homely hero born of star and sod;
 A Peasant Prince; a Masterpiece of God.*

—WALTER MALONE, "Abraham Lincoln."

*For him her Old-World moulds aside she [Nature] threw,
 And choosing sweet clay from the breast
 Of the unexhausted West,
 With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
 Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.*

* * * * *

*Our children shall behold his fame:
 The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
 Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
 New birth of our new soil, the first American.*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, "Ode Recited at the
 Harvard Commemoration" (1865).

An account of Lincoln's life would be out of place here, especially as his autobiography is given below. There are many excellent biographies. The most detailed is that written by his

two secretaries, John Nicolay and John Hay, in ten volumes, published in 1890. There are other excellent biographies by Carl Sandburg, Ida M. Tarbell, Nathaniel W. Stephenson, W. H. Herndon (his law partner), Albert J. Beveridge, and James Garfield Randall. Lord Charnwood's biography inspired John Drinkwater's play, *Abraham Lincoln*. Nicolay and Hay edited *The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1894) in two volumes. A twelve-volume edition of this in 1905 contains R. W. Gilder's essay, "Lincoln as a Writer." Lincoln's methods as a speaker are treated in two chapters in W. N. Brigance (ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (1943). See also D. K. Dodge, *Abraham Lincoln Master of Words*, and L. E. Robinson, *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Letters*. Nathaniel W. Stephenson contributed the chapter on Lincoln in the *C. H. A. L. His Lincoln* (1922) gives the best account of Lincoln's growth in the power to express himself. Of the many volumes of selections, the best is *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings* (1946), edited by Roy P. Basler, who has taken great pains with the text of Lincoln's writings and has contributed an important study of "Lincoln's Development as a Writer." Dr. Basler is the general editor of a new and complete edition of Lincoln's works to be published by the Abraham Lincoln Association.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(1859)

I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon County, Illinois. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where a year or two later he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time

the state came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond "readin', writin', and cipherin'" to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

I was raised to farm work, which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, Macon County. Then I got to New Salem, at that time in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk War; and I was elected a captain of volunteers, a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went the campaign, was elated, ran for the legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten—the only time I ever

have been beaten by the people. The next and three succeeding biennial elections I was elected to the legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During this legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practise it. In 1846 I was once elected to the lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practised law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since that is pretty well known.

If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am, in height, six feet four inches, nearly, lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

January 2 [?] 1851

DEAR JOHNSTON. Your request for eighty dollars I do not think best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little you have said to me, "We can get along very well now"; but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt

you owe, that you can get; and to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar that you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will soon be out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and, if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eighty times eighty dollars to you.

Affectionately your brother,

A. LINCOLN.

TO HORACE GREELEY

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,

August 22, 1862.

HON. HORACE GREELEY:

DEAR SIR: I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the New York *Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose

heart I have always supposed to be right

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

Yours,

A. LINCOLN.

TO GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 26, 1863.

MAJOR-GENERAL HOOKER:

GENERAL: I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which of course

I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY, NOVEMBER 19, 1863

The main address on this occasion was delivered by Edward Everett, who soon afterward wrote to Lincoln: "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes."

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so con-

ceived and so dedicated, can long endure We are met on a great battle-field of that war We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.¹

TO SECRETARY STANTON

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,
March 1, 1864.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR

MY DEAR SIR. A poor widow, by the name of Baird, has a son in the army, that for some offense has been sentenced to serve a long time without pay, or at most with very little pay. I do not like this punishment of withholding pay—it falls so very hard upon poor families After he had been serving in this way for several months, at the tearful appeal of the poor mother, I made a direction that he be allowed to enlist for a new term, on the same conditions as others. She now comes, and says she cannot get it acted upon. Please do it.

Yours truly,
A. LINCOLN.

¹ In an antislavery address in 1850 Theodore Parker had used the phrase: "a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people."

TO MRS. BIXBY

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,
November 21, 1864.

5 MRS. BIXBY, Boston, Massachusetts.

DEAR MADAM: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

March 4, 1865

30 Lincoln wrote to Thurlow Weed, March 15, 1865, that he expected this address "to wear as well—perhaps better than—anything I have produced."

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed

to an impending civil war All dreaded it—all sought to avert it While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could

not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully

The Almighty has his own purposes "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh" If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

HENRY TIMROD

1828 - 1867

*How shall we praise him save with his own song?
The distant note, the delicate strain is there,
Of bees and sedge, of fields dim and apart,
Then, keen with men, affans, loss, glory, wrong,
A various music storms along the air,
Sweeps past the years, and shakes us to the heart!*

—LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE, "Timrod,"
Atlantic Monthly, January, 1900

The Civil War, though it shattered Timrod's health, called forth his most memorable verses and assured him a narrow niche in immortality as the spokesman of a promising culture, prematurely destroyed. "Eithnogenesis" and "The Cotton Boll" portray in miniature the whole splendor of the Southern dream—the dream of a cotton empire, freed from Northern trammels, continental in its breadth, flourishing in the midst of an opulent yet lenient nature, and crowned with a chivalrous people. The new nation of Timrod's picture is to be strong in the possession of a navy furnished by her mountain forests; nevertheless, her chief mission is not to be one of battle. That mission is to be the expansion of commerce through her great staple, cotton, which by drawing men together in the peaceful pursuit of common purposes, may someday revive the ancient dream of universal peace.

—WALTER F. TAYLOR, *A History of American Letters* (1936), p. 219.

Henry Timrod was the son of William Henry Timrod, a book-binder and a minor poet. The date of Timrod's birth was given by his wife and Paul Hamilton Hayne as December 8, 1829. Professor Guy A. Cardwell, Jr., however, discovered in the daybooks of the elder Timrod an entry on December 8 of the preceding year: "Henry H. Timrod born 11-12 P.M." Timrod attended one of the best schools in Charleston. Here he became acquainted with Paul Hamilton Hayne, who sat next to him and to whom he showed his first attempt at writing verse. He spent a year or more at the University of Georgia, but poor health and the lack of money kept him from completing his college course. He studied law in the office of James Louis Petigru, but disliking the law he tutored children of various South Carolina planters. As early as 1848 he began contributing verses to the *Southern Literary Messenger* under the pen-name "Aglauus." The establishment of *Russell's Magazine* in Charleston in 1857 with his friend Hayne as editor gave him another medium for his work. In 1860 the well-known firm of

Ticknor and Fields in Boston published a volume of his poems, which are disappointing to those who have read only his later poems. For it was the outbreak of the Civil War that matured Timrod's talent. His war poems found an immediate response all over the South. In 1873 Whittier wrote to Hayne: "In the year '63 I surprised my friends Emerson, Whipple & Holmes by my enthusiastic praise of one or two of his poems that I had seen." After a disastrous experience as a war correspondent, Timrod worked on the *Columbia South Carolinian* until Sherman's march through Columbia, when the city was burned. The closing years of Timrod's life are among the saddest in literary annals. His only son died; he could find only temporary employment; and he was suffering from tuberculosis. He had others than his immediate family to support, and it was only through the sale of furniture and silver that they managed to live. Timrod did not die of starvation, but the lack of sufficient food was one of the causes of his early death.

Hayne, always loyal to his more gifted friend, brought out a collected edition of Timrod's poems with a brief memoir in 1873. The Timrod Memorial Association published another in 1899 with a few additional poems. In 1942 Professor Cardwell published *The Uncollected Poems of Henry Timrod*, and in the same year Professor Edd Winfield Parks brought out *The Essays of Henry Timrod*, which reveal Timrod as a critic of importance. The best of his essays, "A Theory of Poetry," suggests that Wordsworth influenced Timrod more than any other writer. Jay B. Hubbell's *The Last Years of Henry Timrod* (1941) contains the extant letters of Timrod to Hayne and letters about Timrod written by Hayne, Simms, Whittier, and others. There is no full-length biography of the poet, and there is no complete edition of his writings. Other references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

THE COTTON BOLL

(1861)

While I recline
At ease beneath
This immemorial pine,
Small sphere!
(By dusky fingers brought this morning here
And shown with boastful smiles),
I turn thy cloven sheath,
Through which the soft white fibres peer,
That, with their gossamer bands,
Unite, like love, the sea-divided lands,
And slowly, thread by thread,
Draw forth the folded strands,
Than which the trembling line,
By whose frail help yon startled spider fled
Down the tall spear-grass from his swinging bed,
Is scarce more fine;

And as the tangled skein
Unravels in my hands,
Betwixt me and the noonday light,
A veil seems lifted, and for miles and miles
5 The landscape broadens on my sight,
As, in the little boll, there lurked a spell
Like that which, in the ocean shell,
With mystic sound,
Breaks down the narrow walls that hem us
10 round,
And turns some city lane
Into the restless main,
With all his capes and isles!
15 Yonder bird,
Which floats, as if at rest,
In those blue tracts above the thunder, where
No vapors cloud the stainless air,
And never sound is heard,

Unless at such rare time
 When, from the City of the Blest,
 Rings down some golden chime,
 Sees not from his high place
 So vast a cirque of summer space
 As widens round me in one mighty field,
 Which, rimmed by seas and sands,
 Doth hail its earliest daylight in the beams
 Of gray Atlantic dawns,
 And, broad as realms made up of many lands, 10
 Is lost afar
 Behind the crimson hills and purple lawns
 Of sunset, among plains which roll their streams
 Against the Evening Star!
 And lo!
 To the remotest point of sight,
 Although I gaze upon no waste of snow,
 The endless field is white,
 And the whole landscape glows,
 For many a shining league away,
 With such accumulated light
 As Polar lands would flash beneath a tropic
 day!
 Nor lack there (for the vision grows,
 And the small charm within my hands—
 More potent even than the fabled one,
 Which oped whatever golden mystery
 Lay hid in fairy wood or magic vale,
 The curious ointment of the Arabian tale—
 Beyond all mortal sense
 Doth stretch my sight's horizon, and I see,
 Beneath its simple influence,
 As if with Uriel's crown,
 I stood in some great temple of the Sun,
 And looked, as Uriel, down!)
 Nor lack there pastures rich and fields all green
 With all the common gifts of God,
 For temperate airs and torrid sheen
 Weave Edens of the sod;
 Through lands which look one sea of billowy 40
 gold
 Broad rivers wind their devious ways;
 A hundred isles in their embraces fold
 A hundred luminous bays;
 And through yon purple haze
 Vast mountains lift their plumèd peaks cloud-
 crowned;
 And, save where up their sides the ploughman
 creeps,
 An unhewn forest girds them grandly round,
 In whose dark shades a future navy sleeps!
 Ye Stars, which, though unseen, yet with me
 gaze

Upon this loveliest fragment of the earth!
 Thou Sun, that kindlest all thy gentlest rays
 Above it, as to light a favorite hearth!
 Ye Clouds, that in your temples in the West
 5 See nothing brighter than its humblest flowers!
 And you, ye Winds, that on the ocean's breast
 Are kissed to coolness ere ye reach its bowers!
 Bear witness with me in my song of praise,
 And tell the world that, since the world began,
 10 No fairer land hath fired a poet's lays,
 Or given a home to man!
 But these are charms already widely blown!
 His be the meed whose pencil's trace
 15 Hath touched our very swamps with grace,
 And round whose tuneful way
 All Southern laurels bloom,
 The Poet of "The Woodlands,"¹ unto whom
 Alike are known
 20 The flute's low breathing and the trumpet's
 tone,
 And the soft west wind's sighs;
 But who shall utter all the debt,
 O Land wherein all powers are met
 25 That bind a people's heart,
 The world doth owe thee at this day,
 And which it never can repay,
 Yet scarcely deigns to own!
 Where sleeps the poet who shall fitly sing
 30 The source wherefrom doth spring
 That mighty commerce which, confined
 To the mean channels of no selfish mart,
 Goes out to every shore
 Of this broad earth, and throngs the sea with
 35 ships
 That bear no thunders; hushes hungry lips
 In alien lands;
 Joins with a delicate web remotest strands,
 And gladdening rich and poor,
 Doth gild Parisian domes,
 Or feed the cottage-smoke of English homes,
 And only bounds its blessings by mankind!
 In offices like these, thy mission lies,
 My Country! and it shall not end
 45 As long as rain shall fall and Heaven bend
 In blue above thee; though thy foes be hard
 And cruel as their weapons, it shall guard
 Thy hearth-stones as a bulwark; make thee great
 In white and bloodless state,
 50 And haply, as the years increase—
 Still working through its humbler reach

¹ Simms.

With that large wisdom which the ages teach—
 Revive the half-dead dream of universal peace!
 As men who labor in that mine
 Of Cornwall, hollowed out beneath the bed
 Of ocean, when a storm rolls overhead,
 Hear the dull booming of the world of brine
 Above them, and a mighty muffled roar
 Of winds and waters, yet toil calmly on,
 And split the rock, and pile the massive ore,
 Or carve a niche, or shape the archèd roof;
 So I, as calmly, weave my woof
 Of song, chanting the days to come,
 Unsilenced, though the quiet summer air
 Stirs with the bruit of battles, and each dawn
 Wakes from its starry silence to the hum
 Of many gathering armies Still,
 In that we sometimes hear,
 Upon the Northern winds, the voice of woe
 Not wholly drowned in triumph, though I know
 The end must crown us, and a few brief years
 Dry all our tears,
 I may not sing too gladly. To Thy will
 Resigned, O Lord! we cannot all forget
 That there is much even Victory must regret.
 And, therefore, not too long
 From the great burthen of our country's wrong
 Delay our just release!
 And, if it may be, save
 These sacred fields of peace
 From stain of patriot or of hostile blood!
 Oh, help us, Lord! to roll the crimson flood
 Back on its course, and while our banners wing
 Northward, strike with us! till the Goth shall
 cling
 To his own blasted altar-stones, and crave
 Mercy; and we shall grant it, and dictate
 The lenient future of his fate
 There, where some rotting ships and crumbling
 quays
 Shall one day mark the Port which ruled the
 Western seas.

CAROLINA

(1862)

I

The despot treads thy sacred sands,
 Thy pines give shelter to his bands,
 Thy sons stand by with idle hands,
 Carolina!
 He breathes at ease thy airs of balm,

He scorns the lances of thy palm;
 Oh! who shall break thy craven calm,
 Carolina!

Thy ancient fame is growing dim,
 5 A spot is on thy garment's rim;
 Give to the winds thy battle hymn,
 Carolina!

II

10 Call on thy children of the hill,
 Wake swamp and river, coast and rill,
 Rouse all thy strength and all thy skill,
 Carolina!
 Cite wealth and science, trade and art,
 15 Touch with thy fire the cautious mart,
 And pour thee through the people's heart,
 Carolina!
 Till even the coward spurns his fears,
 And all thy fields and fens and meres
 20 Shall bristle like thy palm with spears,
 Carolina!

III

Hold up the glories of thy dead;
 25 Say how thy elder children bled,
 And point to Eutaw's battle-bed,
 Carolina!
 Tell how the patriot's soul was tried,
 And what his dauntless breast defied;
 30 How Rutledge ruled and Laurens died,
 Carolina!
 Cry! till thy summons, heard at last,
 Shall fall like Marion's bugle-blast
 Re-echoed from the haunted Past,
 35 Carolina!

IV

I hear a murmur as of waves
 That grope their way through sunless caves,
 Like bodies struggling in their graves,
 Carolina!
 And now it deepens, slow and grand
 It swells, as, rolling to the land,
 An ocean broke upon thy strand,
 Carolina!
 45 Shout! let it reach the startled Huns!
 And roar with all thy festal guns!
 It is the answer of thy sons,
 Carolina!

V

They will not wait to hear thee call;
 From Sachem's Head to Sumter's wall

Resounds the voice of hut and hall,

Carolinal

No! thou hast not a stain, they say,
Or none save what the battle-day
Shall wash in seas of blood away,

Carolinal

Thy skirts indeed the foe may part,
Thy robe be pierced with sword and dart,
They shall not touch thy noble heart,

Carolinal

VI

Ere thou shalt own the tyrant's thrall
Ten times ten thousand men must fall;
Thy corpse may hearken to his call,

Carolinal

When, by thy bier, in mournful throngs
The women chant thy mortal wrongs,
'Twill be their own funereal songs,

Carolinal

From thy dead breast by ruffians trod
No helpless child shall look to God;
All shall be safe beneath thy sod,

Carolinal

VII

Girt with such wills to do and bear,
Assured in right, and mailed in prayer,
Thou wilt not bow thee to despair,

Carolinal

Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas
Like thine own proud armorial trees,

Carolinal

Fling down thy gauntlet to the Huns,
And roar the challenge from thy guns;
Then leave the future to thy sons,

Carolinal

CHARLESTON

(1862)

Calm as that second summer which precedes
The first fall of the snow,
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds
The City bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts stern and proud,
Her bolted thunders sleep—
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
Looms o'er the solemn deep.

• 220 •

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scar
To guard the holy strand,
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war
Above the level sand.

5

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie
couched

Unseen beside the flood—

Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched

10

That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with
trade,

Walk grave and thoughtful men

15

Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's
blade

As lightly as the pen.

And maidens with such eyes as would grow dim

20

Over a bleeding hound

Seem each one to have caught the strength of
him

Whose sword she sadly bound.

25

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,
Day patient following day,

Old Charleston looks from roof and spire and
dome

Across her tranquil bay.

30

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon
lands

And spicy Indian ports

Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands

35

And Summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,

The only hostile smoke

Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine

40

From some frail, floating oak

Shall the Spring dawn, and she still clad in
smiles

And with an unscathed brow,

45

Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned
isles

As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates

50

God has inscribed her doom;

And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits

The triumph or the tomb.

SPRING

(1863)

Spring, with that nameless pathos in the air
Which dwells with all things fair,
Spring, with her golden suns and silver rain,
Is with us once again.

Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns
Its fragrant lamps, and turns
Into a royal court with green festoons
The banks of dark lagoons

In the deep heart of every forest tree
The blood is all aglee,
And there's a look about the leafless bowers
As if they dreamed of flowers.

Yet still on every side we trace the hand
Of Winter in the land,
Save where the maple reddens on the lawn,
Flushed by the season's dawn,

Or where, like those strange semblances we find
That age to childhood bind,
The elm puts on, as if in Nature's scorn,
The brown of Autumn corn.

As yet the turf is dark, although you know
That, not a span below,
A thousand germs are groping through the
gloom,
And soon will burst their tomb.

Already, here and there, on frailest stems
Appear some azure gems,
Small as might deck, upon a gala day,
The forehead of a fay.

In gardens you may note amid the dearth
The crocus breaking earth,
And near the snowdrop's tender white and
green,
The violet in its screen.

But many gleams and shadows need must pass
Along the budding grass,
And weeks go by, before the enamored South
Shall kiss the rose's mouth.

Still there's a sense of blossoms yet unborn
In the sweet airs of morn;

One almost looks to see the very street
Grow purple at his feet.

At times a fragrant breeze comes floating by,
5 And brings, you know not why,
A feeling as when eager crowds await
Before a palace gate

Some wondrous pageant, and you scarce would
10 start,
If from a beech's heart,
A blue-eyed Dryad, stepping forth, should say,
"Behold me! I am May!"

15 Ah! who would couple thoughts of war and
crime
With such a blessed time!
Who in the west wind's aromatic breath
Could hear the call of Death!

20 Yet not more surely shall the Spring awake
The voice of wood and brake,
Then she shall rouse, for all her tranquil
charms,
25 A million men to arms.

There shall be deeper hues upon her plains
Than all her sunlit rains,
And every gladdening influence around,
30 Can summon from the ground.

Oh! standing on this desecrated mould,
Methinks that I behold,
Lifting her bloody daisies up to God,
35 Spring kneeling on the sod,

And calling, with the voice of all her rills,
Upon the ancient hills
To fall and crush the tyrants and the slaves
40 Who turn her meads to graves

THE UNKNOWN DEAD

(1863)

45 The rain is plashing on my sill,
But all the winds of Heaven are still;
And so it falls with that dull sound
Which thrills us in the church-yard ground,
50 When the first spadeful drops like lead
Upon the coffin of the dead.
Beyond my streaming window-pane,

I cannot see the neighboring vane,
 Yet from its old familiar tower
 The bell comes, muffled, through the shower.
 What strange and unsuspected link
 Of feeling touched, has made me think—
 While with a vacant soul and eye
 I watch that gray and stony sky—
 Of nameless graves on battle-plains
 Washed by a single winter's rains,
 Where, some beneath Virginian hills,
 And some by green Atlantic rills,
 Some by the waters of the West,
 A myriad unknown heroes rest.
 Ah! not the chiefs, who, dying, see
 Their flags in front of victory,
 Or, at their life-blood's noble cost
 Pay for a battle nobly lost,
 Claim from their monumental beds
 The bitterest tears a nation sheds.
 Beneath yon lonely mound—the spot
 By all save some fond few forgot—
 Lie the true martyrs of the fight
 Which strikes for freedom and for right
 Of them, their patriot zeal and pride,
 The lofty faith that with them died,
 No grateful page shall farther tell
 Than that so many bravely fell;
 And we can only dimly guess
 What worlds of all this world's distress,
 What utter woe, despair, and dearth,
 Their fate has brought to many a hearth.
 Just such a sky as this should weep
 Above them, always, where they sleep;
 Yet, haply, at this very hour,
 Their graves are like a lover's bower;
 And Nature's self, with eyes unwet,
 Oblivious of the crimson debt
 To which she owes her April grace,
 Laughs gayly o'er their burial-place.

ODE

(1866)

This poem was written to be sung at the memorial exercises held in the Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston on June 16, 1866. The "Ode" is usually dated a year later, but Professor G. P. Voigt discovered in the Charleston *Daily Courier* both the error in the date of the poem and a revised version of the poem not contained in any edition of Timrod's poems (See his article, "New Light on Timrod's 'Memorial Ode,'" *American Literature*, IV, 395-396, January, 1933.) Compare William Collins's "Ode," beginning

*"How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
 By all their country's wishes blessed!"*

15 Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,
 Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;
 Though yet no marble column craves
 The pilgrim here to pause.

20 In seeds of laurels in the earth,
 The garlands of your fame are sown;
 And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
 The shaft is in the stone!

25 Meanwhile, your sisters for the years
 Which hold in trust your storied tombs,
 Bring all they now can give you—tears,
 And these memorial blooms

30 Small tributes, but your shades will smile
 As proudly on those wreaths today,
 As when some cannon-moulded pile
 Shall overlook this Bay.

35 Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
 There is no holier spot of ground
 Than where defeated valor lies,
 By mourning beauty crowned!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807 - 1882

*"Non vox sed votum,
Non chorda sed cor,
Non clamor sed amor,
Clangit in aure Dei.*

*" 'Not voice but vow,
Not harp-string but heart-string,
Not loudness but love,
Sounds in the ear of God '1"*

Longfellow, the most popular poet of his generation, was born in Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. Boyhood impressions of Portland appear in one of his best poems, "My Lost Youth." Longfellow was well born and well bred. Like Bryant, he was a descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, who asked the question, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" His father, a lawyer and a graduate of Harvard, would probably have sent his son to that college but for the fact that he had become a trustee of Bowdoin College, to which he naturally sent his son. There Longfellow was much more the model student than his classmate, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Longfellow had early shown a keen interest in literature and had written verses, some of which show the influence of Bryant. Having made up his mind to a literary career, while in college he wrote his father the following significant letter in regard to his wishes:

December 5, 1824

"I take this early opportunity to write to you, because I wish to know fully your inclination with regard to the profession I am to pursue when I leave college.

"For my part, I have already hinted to you what would best please me. I want to spend one year at Cambridge [Harvard] for the purpose of reading history, and of becoming familiar with the best authors in polite literature; whilst at the same time I can be acquiring a knowledge of the Italian language, without an acquaintance with which I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful departments of letters. The French I mean to understand pretty thoroughly before I leave

¹ From a book-plate used by Longfellow. The lines are anonymous.

college After leaving Cambridge, I would attach myself to some literary periodical publication, by which I could maintain myself and still enjoy the advantages of reading. Now, I do not think that there is anything visionary or chimerical in my plan thus far. The fact is—and I will not disguise it in the least, for I think I ought not—the fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it. There may be something visionary in *this*, but I flatter myself that I have prudence enough to keep my enthusiasm from defeating its own object by too great haste. Surely, there never was a better opportunity offered for the exertion of literary talent in our own country than is now offered. To be sure, most of our literary men thus far have not been professedly so, until they have studied and entered the practice of Theology, Law, or Medicine. But this is evidently lost time. . . .

“Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing, that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of law.

“Here, then, seems to be the starting point: and I think it best for me to float out into the world upon that tide and in that channel which will the soonest bring me to my destined port, and not to struggle against both wind and tide, and by attempting what is impossible lose everything.”

Here is a portion of the father's reply:

“The subject of your first letter is one of deep interest and demands great consideration. A literary life, to one who has the means of support, must be very pleasant. But there is not wealth enough in this country to afford encouragement to merely literary men. And as you have not had the fortune (I will not say whether good or ill) to be born rich, you must adopt a profession which will afford you subsistence as well as reputation. . . . With regard to your spending a year at Cambridge, I have always thought it might be beneficial; and if my health should not be impaired and my finances should allow, I should be very happy to gratify you.”

The young poet, fully determined to “be eminent in something,” apparently made up his mind to become a lawyer. “I can be a lawyer,” he wrote his father. “This will support my real existence, literature an *ideal* one.” Fate, however, kept Longfellow out of the legal profession into which drifted so many of our writers—among them, Irving, Bryant, Lowell, Boker, and Lanier. At the 1825 commencement the trustees of Bowdoin College voted to establish a professorship of modern languages. The study of modern languages—a field in which Longfellow was to be an influential pioneer—was just beginning. At Harvard George Ticknor held the Smith Professorship of Modern Languages, to which Longfellow was by and by to succeed. How the Bowdoin College authorities came to select for the new position the eighteen-year-old youth who had just graduated fourth in his class may be explained by the story that at the Senior Examination Benjamin Orr, a trustee, “had been much struck by Longfellow's elegant translation of an Ode of Horace, . . . and warmly presented his name for the new chair.” And so Longfellow went to Europe to prepare himself for his new profession, which was to have a profound influence on his literary career.

1807-1882-----HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

For Longfellow, as for Irving, Europe rather than America was the abode of romance. And yet, romantic pilgrim though he was, Longfellow acquired a command of French, Spanish, and Italian, and learned some German. He wrote to his father in regard to his accomplishment on December 19, 1828:

"I know you cannot be dissatisfied with the progress I have made in my studies. I speak honestly, not boastingly. With the French and Spanish languages I am familiarly conversant, so as to speak them correctly, and write them with as much ease and fluency as I do the English. The Portuguese I read without difficulty. And with regard to my proficiency in the Italian, I have only to say that all at the hotel where I lodge took me for an Italian until I told them I was an American."

During his three-year stay in Europe, Longfellow planned a volume of prose "Sketches of New England Life," and although he never completed these, he made a beginning on *Outre Mer*, which is a kind of European *Sketch Book*. He had long admired Irving, whom he finally met in Spain and found to possess the same charm as his books. What Longfellow saw of European universities gave him a new perspective upon the New England colleges. The future instructor wrote to his father:

"What has hitherto been the idea of an University with us? The answer is a simple one:—Two or three large brick buildings—with a chapel, and a President to pray in it! . . . when there is an American University, instead of seeing a new College ushered into existence every winter by a petition to the Legislature for funds to put up a parcel of Woollen-Factory buildings for students—we should see capital better employed in enriching the libraries of the country and making them *public!*—and instead of seeing the youth of our country chained together like galley slaves and 'scourged to their dungeon'—as it were—our eyes would be cheered by the grateful spectacle of mind throwing its fetters off—and education free from its chains and shackles."

Before his return to Bowdoin, Longfellow had the mortification of having the college authorities offer him not the \$1,000 professorship which he had been led to expect but a \$600 "tutorship." He showed the proper spirit in fighting for his rights. He was given the rank he had been promised, and his salary was raised to \$800, with an additional \$100 for serving as college librarian. The college authorities had selected a better instructor than they knew; for, like Ticknor, Bancroft, Everett, and others who had gone to Europe before him, Longfellow came back with a determination to raise the level of the work in the American college. Finding no suitable textbooks, he proceeded to prepare some for his own classes. In a letter to his friend George W. Greene, the young instructor gives us a glimpse of his daily routine:

"I rise at six in the morning, and hear a French recitation of Sophomores immediately. At seven I breakfast, and am then master of my time till eleven, when I hear a Spanish lesson of Juniors. After that I take a lunch; and at twelve I go into the library, where I remain till one. I am then at leisure for the afternoon till five, when I have a French recitation of Juniors. At six, I take coffee; then walk and visit friends till nine; study till twelve, and sleep till six, when I begin the same round again. Such is the daily routine of my life. The intervals of college duty I fill up with my own studies. Last term I was publishing text-books for the use of my pupils, in whom I take a deep interest. This term I am writing a course

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of lectures on French, Spanish, and Italian literature. I shall commence lecturing to the two upper classes in a few days You see, I lead a very sober, jog-trot kind of life. . . .

"I am delighted more and more with the profession I have embraced "

For an account of Longfellow's surprisingly modern methods of teaching a foreign language, we must turn to a later period in his life. Edward Everett Hale, author of "The Man without a Country," has described Longfellow's method of teaching his beginners' class in German at Harvard:

"We sat round a mahogany table, which was reported to be meant for the dinners of the Fellows, and the whole affair had the aspect of a friendly gathering in a private house, in which the study of German was the amusement of the occasion. He began with familiar ballads,—read them to us, and made us read them to him. Of course, we soon committed them to memory without meaning to, and I think this was probably part of his theory. . . . We all knew he was a poet, and were proud to have him in the college, but at the same time we respected him as a man of affairs."

While still abroad, Longfellow had written to his sister Elizabeth, "My poetic career is finished " He began to write verse again in 1832, although his first volume of poems, *Voices of the Night*, did not appear until 1839. In 1833 he had published his *Outre Mer: A Pilgrimage beyond the Sea* in separate numbers like *The Sketch Book*.

A little-known short story by Longfellow, "The Wondrous Tale of a Little Man in Gosling Green" (see *American Literature*, III, 136-148, May, 1931), leads one to believe that the small-town atmosphere of Brunswick irritated the cosmopolitan young instructor He was much pleased when Harvard offered him the Smith Professorship at \$1500 a year, with the privilege of spending a year or more in Europe before beginning his teaching On this second stay in Europe Longfellow gave most of his attention to the Germanic languages and literatures. His young wife—he had married Mary Potter in 1831—died in Rotterdam in November, 1835. He began work at Harvard in the fall of 1836 In 1843 he married the cultured and charming Frances Appleton, whom he had met first in Europe and to whom he long paid court in vain.

The young poet was something of a dandy in dress, and he was fond of social life. "There is such a social spirit here and in Boston," he writes to his father in 1837, "that I seldom see a book by candle-light. . . . People here are too agreeable to let a man kill himself with study." Even Boston struck him as provincial. He wrote some months later to his father: "Boston is only a great village. The tyranny of public opinion there surpasses belief." In 1853 he wrote in his journal: "Dined in town. A pleasant enough dinner; but my ways of thinking are so different from those of most of the Bostonians that there is not much satisfaction in talking with them. ——— himself is an exception. He has a liberal, catholic mind, and does not speak as if he were the pope." In another mood he writes, "After all, Cambridge delighteth my heart exceedingly." And well it might when in a single afternoon's walk he could meet four men like those mentioned in a letter to Samuel Waid on March 11, 1839:

"Walking in the pleasant sunset, I met Richard Dana [author of *Two Years before the Mast*], and shortly afterward his father, the old essayist, author of *The Idle Man*, a courteous gentleman, who has somewhat outlived his fame, and to

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whom the present generation does not pay the honor which is due to him. We had some pleasant chat about the British essayists, and the charm that still lingers round their memory. As we walked we met Lowell and Norton; and I felt that we belonged to the 'Old-Guard.' ”

Gradually as his poems became more popular, Longfellow's interest shifted more and more from teaching to creative writing, and he came to feel that teaching interfered with his real vocation. He finally gave up his professorship in 1854. Here are two of numerous similar passages in his journal written before his retirement:

“I could live very happily here if I could chain myself down to college duties and be nothing but a professor. I should then have work enough and recreation enough. But I am too restless for this. What should I be at fifty? A fat mill-horse, grinding round with blinkers on.”

“I seriously think of resigning my professorship. My time is so fully taken up by its lectures and other duties that I have none left for writing. Then, my eyes are suffering, and the years are precious. And if I wish to do anything in literature it must be done now. Few men have written good poetry after fifty.”

Longfellow's first volume of poems, *Voices of the Night* (1839), contains some of his most popular poems—which are in some instances also his worst. In “A Psalm of Life” we find him confusing poetry with preaching. In “Footsteps of Angels” we find sentimentality instead of deep feeling. His “Hymn to the Night,” however, is one of the finest lyrics he ever wrote. The next volume, *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841), contains two sentimental favorites, “Maidenhood” and “The Wreck of the Hesperus,” and “The Village Blacksmith,” tagged with an irrelevant moral; but it also contains “The Skeleton in Armor,” which is one of his best ballads. Longfellow was an excellent narrative poet, more consistently good than Whittier. He wrote to his friend Greene on January 2, 1840:

“I have broken ground in a new field, namely, ballads, . . . The *national ballad* is a virgin soil here in New England, and there are great materials. Besides, I have a great notion of working upon the *people's* feelings. I am going to have it printed on a sheet, with a coarse picture on it. I desire a new sensation and a new set of critics. Nat. Hawthorne is tickled with the idea. Felton laughs and says, ‘I wouldn't.’ [The plan was abandoned.]”

In the 'forties and 'fifties come Longfellow's extremely popular long narratives: *Evangeline* (1847); *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), published in the same year as Whitman's first edition of *Leaves of Grass*; and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858). These are all extended narratives upon American themes, and each is written in what was then a novel metrical form.

In 1854, as we have seen, Longfellow gave up teaching in order to devote all his time to writing. In 1861 came the great sorrow of the poet's life, the death of Mrs. Longfellow, who was so badly burned that she died soon afterward. To keep from brooding over his grief and the Civil War, he began translating Dante's *Divine Comedy*. “The Cross of Snow,” a sonnet written eighteen years after Frances Longfellow's death, is one of the very few poems in which Longfellow expresses his deeper feelings. Some critics have mistakenly concluded that the man had no deep feelings.

Some of the poems (especially the sonnets) written after Longfellow's retirement are better

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—and less popular—than his earlier poems. At the same time some of his longer efforts, such as the closet-dramas, *The Divine Tragedy*, *The Golden Legend*, and *The New England Tragedies*, are ventures into a field for which he was not well fitted. The three parts of the *Tales of the Wayside Inn* (1863, 1872, 1873) belong to the field of narrative verse in which Longfellow excelled. As a whole, however, the book is not an unqualified success. Patterned after Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, the collection seems curiously un-American. Chaucer's narrators were thoroughly English; many of Longfellow's do not even belong to New England. Why should he bring a Sicilian or a Spanish Jew to Sudbury, Massachusetts? Professor Fred Lewis Pattee remarks:

“None of our writers travelled so little in their own country, aside from one trip to Washington he never got further west than New York. He looked eastward rather than westward, the study in the old Craigie House had only eastern windows.”

Longfellow, it must be said, took modestly the many honors which came to him. In 1868 he was given an honorary LL.D. degree by the University of Cambridge. After his death in 1882 his bust was placed in Westminster Abbey.

There were a few critics like Margaret Fuller and Poe who thought Longfellow vastly over-rated; but he was unquestionably the most popular poet this country has ever had, and he was hardly less popular among the masses (not the intellectuals) in England. The year before he died, Amelia B. Edwards wrote in an article in the *Literary World* entitled “Longfellow's Place in England”:

“There cannot, I imagine, be any doubt that Professor Longfellow is in England the most widely read of living poets. Messrs. Routledge and Sons, who are his authorized publishers in this country [England], have on sale at the present moment eight different editions of his works, varying in price from one shilling to one guinea; while at least a dozen other houses—profiting by the absence of an international copyright law—publish unauthorized editions. . . . Thus it is that our English versions . . . are as the leaves on the trees, or the pebbles on the shore. Thus it is that at every bookseller's shop in town or country ‘Longfellow's Poems’ are a staple of trade. As a prize-book for schools, as a gift-book, as a drawing-room table book, as a pocket-volume for the woods and fields, our familiar and beloved friend of something like forty years meets us at every turn. Of new copies alone, it is calculated that not less than 30,000 are annually sold in the United Kingdom.”

Nevertheless, as Bliss Perry reminds us, “To the true lover of books, the quality of a poet is everything; the counting of the heads of the poet's audience is but an idle occupation.” Edward Dowden, an Irish scholar who loved Whitman, commented: “. . . except in a heightened enjoyment of the antique . . . Longfellow is one of ourselves—an European. ‘Evangeline’ is an European Idyl of American Life, [Goethe's] Hermann and Dorothea having emigrated to Acadie. ‘Hiawatha’ might have been dreamed in Kensington by a London man of letters.” Anthony Trollope, a British novelist who admired Longfellow, wrote:

“‘This is the pleasantest man I ever met,’ the British stranger is inclined to say [when he meets Longfellow]. ‘He is a first-class gentleman. But where is Longfellow? Where's the American poet?’

1807-1882-----HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

"He is, I think, essentially unlike his countrymen,—so much so, that, of all the poets of his day, he is the last that I should have guessed to be an American had I come across his works in ignorance of the fact."

Longfellow was more human than most persons seem to realize. Francis H. Underwood tells the following story.

"When 'Hiawatha' appeared, it was sharply attacked in certain newspapers, and Fields, his publisher, after reading something particularly savage, went out in a state of excitement to see Longfellow. The poet heard the account, and then in a casual way said, 'By the way, Mr. Fields, how is the book selling?' 'Enormously, we are running presses night and day to fill the orders' 'Very well,' said Longfellow quietly, 'then don't you think we had better let these critics go on advertising it?'"

Every one who knew the man was impressed by his integrity, his kindliness, and his personal charm. Howells said of him "All men that I have known, besides, have had some foible (it often endeared them the more), or some meanness, or pettiness, or bitterness; but Longfellow had none, nor the suggestion of any." What strikes the modern reader is what impressed the late Gamaliel Bradford, who wrote: "I confess, then, that it puzzles me to find in Longfellow's character this marked element of distinction, or as Howells terms it, 'quality,' which seems to me to be conspicuously lacking in his poetry." The following passages from the letters and journals throw light upon one side of his nature:

"I think it exquisite to read good novels in bed with wax lights in silver candlesticks,—Disraeli's Vivian Grey, for example."

"In the evening F [Mrs. Longfellow], read Frémont's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in 1842, highly interesting and exciting. What a wild life, and what a fresh kind of existence! But, ah, the discomforts!"

"Niagara is too much for me, my nerves shake like a bridge of wire; a vague sense of terror and unrest haunts me all the time. My head swims and reels with the ceaseless motion of the water."

"I should doubtless write often, if events often occurred in this silent land which I thought might have an interest for you. But only look at the events! They are like those of the Vicar of Wakefield's life,—migrations from the blue bed to the brown!"

In studying Longfellow's poems, one should not lose sight of the man's profession—the teaching of modern languages and literatures. It was his business to bring to his readers, as to his students, the romance and the beauty of Europe and European literatures. As Bliss Perry remarks, ". . . it was through Longfellow, more than any other man, that the poetry of the Old World—the romance of town and tower and storied stream, the figures of monk and saint and man-at-arms, of troubadour and minnesinger, of artist and builder and dreamer—became the familiar possessions of the New." For a young literature still half enslaved to British traditions, this was an important service, and whatever the lasting poetic quality of his poems and translations, Longfellow will always have an important place in our cultural history.

In spite of his derivative nature, Longfellow is in some ways our most representative poet. The masses cared nothing for Walt Whitman, who tried to create a distinctively American poetry, while they read and approved Longfellow's more conventional verse whether on Amer-

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE-----1830-1870

ican themes or not. And in spite of critical disapproval, he is still the most widely read of all our poets. The following selections from his "Table-Talk" (given in Volume III of Samuel Longfellow's *Life*) throw light upon the poet's aims:

"Sometimes a single felicitous expression or line in a poem saves it from oblivion. There are other poems in which no individual lines or passages predominate. Like Wagner's music, they are equally sustained throughout, and depend for their effect upon their impression as a whole, and not on particular parts. Which of these kinds is the better is a question that should neither be asked nor answered. Each is good in its way. We should be thankful for both."

"Shall there be no repose in literature? Shall every author be like a gladiator with swollen veins and distended nostrils, as if each encounter was for life or death?"

"Those poets who make vice beautiful with the beauty of their song are like the Byzantine artists who painted the Devil with a nimbus."

CRITICAL COMMENTS

In studying Longfellow, whom every one has read before coming to college, it is important that we rid ourselves of childish impressions. Longfellow is no Homer or Shakespeare. Neither is he so bad a poet as many twentieth-century critics have concluded. The following critical comments are merely illustrative.

We have said that Mr. Longfellow's conception of the *aims* of poesy is erroneous; and that thus, laboring at a disadvantage he does violent wrong to his own high powers; . . . But didacticism is the prevalent *tone* of his song. His invention, his imagery, his all, is made subservient to the elucidation of some one or more points (but rarely of more than one) which he looks upon as *truth* (Edgar Allan Poe, "Longfellow's Ballads," 1842).

Longfellow is artificial and imitative. He borrows incessantly, and mixes what he borrows, so that it does not appear to the best advantage. He is very faulty in using broken or mixed metaphors. The ethical part of his writing has a hollow, second-hand sound. He has, however, elegance, a love of the beautiful, and a fancy for what is large and manly, if not a full sympathy with it. His verse breathes at times much sweetness, and, if not allowed to supersede what is better may promote a taste for good poetry. Though imitative, he is not mechanical (Margaret Fuller, "American Literature," *Art, Literature, and the Drama*, Boston, 1860, p. 308)

To Longfellow the world was a German picture-book, never detaching itself from the softly colored pages. He was a man of one continuous mood: it was that of a flaxen-haired German student on his *wanderjahr* along the Rhine, under the autumn sun—a sort of expurgated German student—ambling among the ruined castles and reddening vines, and summoning up a thousand bright remnants of an always musical past. His was an eminently Teutonic nature of the old school, a pale-blue melting nature, and white hair and grandchildren still found him with all the confused emotion, the charming sadness, the indefinite high proposals of seventeen (Van Wyck Brooks, *America's Coming-of-Age*, 1915).

Lucidity, gentleness, musicality—these are the essential qualities of Longfellow's poetry (Howard Mumford Jones in John Macy (ed.), *American Writers on American Literature*, 1931, p. 108).

1807-1882-----HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Sympathy, which was the key to Longfellow's character, is the characteristic of his verse—sympathy and serenity . . .

The reader might be warned—if he will permit the figure of speech—to sample Longfellow gradually, not to gulp him down. The very ease with which he can be consumed is likely to result in an overdose and a consequent distaste. Such a circumstance would be a pity, for, lacking the fiery wormwood of Poe, the light ebullience of Holmes and the heady potation of Whitman, Longfellow's distillation is that of a milder vintage, a delicate but full-flavored wine of honorable associations (Louis Untermeyer, *American Poetry . . . to Whitman*, 1931, p. 274).

The *Life* in three volumes (1885-1887) by Longfellow's brother Samuel contains many letters and extracts from his journal which are of great value. Later biographies, none of which is altogether satisfactory, are by G. R. Carpenter (1901), Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1902), and Herbert S. Gorman (1926). Excellent for the period it covers is Lawrance Thompson, *Young Longfellow, 1807-1843* (1938). James Taft Hatfield's *New Light on Longfellow* (1933) throws light upon Longfellow's German connections. For Longfellow as a teacher, see Carl L. Johnson, *Professor Longfellow of Harvard* (1944). The *Complete Poetical and Prose Works* (Riverside Edition) in eleven volumes were published in 1886. The best edition of the poems is the Cambridge Edition, edited by H. E. Scudder (1893). Odell Shepard's *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Representative Selections* (1934), in the American Writers Series, contains an admirable introductory essay and an excellent bibliography. Two excellent essays are G. R. Elliott's "The Gentle Shades of Longfellow," *Southwest Review*, April, 1925 (reprinted in his *The Cycle of Modern Poetry*, 1929), and Howard Mumford Jones's "Longfellow," in *American Writers on American Literature* (1931), edited by John Macy. See also Professor Jones's "The Longfellow Nobody Knows," *Outlook*, August 8, 1928.

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THE DAY IS DONE

(1844)

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

5

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

(1839; 1839)

Longfellow wrote this poem in the summer of 1839, "while sitting at my chamber window on one of the balmy nights of the year I endeavored to reproduce the impression of the hour and scene." The poem has something of the elevation of an ode.

15

Ἀσπασία τριλλιστος

20

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

25

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above,
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

30

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

35

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

40

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

45

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for,¹ the most
fair,

50

The best-beloved Night

¹ "The welcome, the thrice-prayed for" is a translation of the Greek motto prefixed to the poem

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

(1840)

"The Skeleton in Armor" is one of Longfellow's best ballads. Poe, who was not accustomed to praise the work of New England writers, wrote in his review of Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*.

"In 'The Skeleton in Armor' we find a pure and perfect thesis artistically treated. We find the beauty of bold courage and self-confidence, of love and maiden devotion, of reckless adventure, and finally of life-contemning grief. . . The metre is simple, sonorous, well-balanced, and fully adapted to the subject."

Longfellow wrote in his journal on May 3, 1838: "I have been looking at the old Northern Sagas, and thinking of a series of ballads or a romantic poem on the deeds of the first bold viking who crossed to this western world, with storm-spirits and devil-machinery under water." The immediate occasion of the poem was the discovery of the skeleton of a supposed Norseman at Fall River. After the ballad was written, Longfellow wrote to his father on December 13, 1840: "[In the poem] I suppose it to be the remains of one of the old Northern sea rovers who came to this country in the tenth century. Of course I make the tradition myself." One of Longfellow's best longer narratives is "The Saga of King Olaf" in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. "The Skeleton in Armor" should be compared with Shelley's "The Fugitives," to which it is perhaps indebted.

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!

Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,

And in the forest's shade
 Our vows were plighted.
 Under its loosened vest
 Fluttered her little breast,
 Like birds within their nest
 By the hawk frightened.

"Bright in her father's hall
 Shields gleamed upon the wall,
 Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory,
 When of old Hildebrand
 I asked his daughter's hand,
 Mute did the minstrels stand.
 To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
 Loud then the champion laughed,
 And as the wind-gusts waft
 The sea-foam brightly,
 So the loud laugh of scorn,
 Out of those lips unshorn,
 From the deep drinking-horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child,
 I but a Viking wild,
 And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded!
 Should not the dove so white
 Follow the sea-mew's flight,
 Why did they leave that night
 Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea,
 Bearing the maid with me,
 Fairest of all was she
 Among the Norsemen!
 When on the white sea-strand,
 Waving his armed hand,
 Saw we old Hildebrand,
 With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
 Bent like a reed each mast,
 Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us;
 And with a sudden flaw
 Came round the gusty Skaw,
 So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

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"And as to catch the gale
 Round veered the flapping sail,
 'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
 'Death without quarter!'
 5 Mid-ships with iron keel
 Struck we her ribs of steel;
 Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

10 "As with his wings aslant,
 Sails the fierce cormorant,
 Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,—
 So toward the open main,
 15 Beating to sea again,
 Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden

"Three weeks we westward bore,
 20 And when the storm was o'er
 Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward,
 There for my lady's bower
 Built I the lofty tower,
 25 Which, to this very hour,
 Stands looking seaward

"There lived we many years;
 Time dried the maiden's tears;
 30 She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother,
 Death closed her mild blue eyes,
 Under that tower she lies;
 Ne'er shall the sun arise
 35 On such another!

"Still grew my bosom then,
 Still as a stagnant fen!
 40 Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hatefull
 In the vast forest here,
 Clad in my warlike gear,
 Fell I upon my spear,
 Oh, death was gratefull

45 "Thus, seamed with many scars,
 Bursting these prison bars,
 Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended!
 50 There from the flowing bowl
 Deep drinks the warrior's soul,

Skaal! to the Northland! *skaal!*"¹
Thus the tale ended.

SERENADE

from THE SPANISH STUDENT (1843)
(1840)

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch! while in slumbers light
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

MEZZO CAMMIN²

(1842; 1886)

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret

¹ "In Scandinavia, this is the customary salutation when drinking a health I have slightly changed the orthography of the word [*skaal*] in order to preserve the correct pronunciation" (Longfellow's note)

² "In the middle of the way (or journey)." Cf. the opening line of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Longfellow's translation: "Midway upon the journey of our life."

Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
5 Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,—
A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming
lights,—
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
10 The cataract of Death far thundering from the
heights.

SEAWEED

(1845)

"In versification, verbal music, and imagery, the first four stanzas of this poem are among the finest things of Longfellow's accomplishment. To the taste of our day the final stanzas are worse than useless. Longfellow's homiletic method is clearly illustrated here" (Odell Shepard, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, p. 354)

When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks
30 From Bermuda's reefs, from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
35 Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
40 Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—
Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
45 On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
50 All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
Strike the ocean

Of the poet's soul, erelong
From each cave and rocky fastness,
In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song

From the far-off isles enchanted,
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth,
From the flashing surf, whose vision
Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
That forever
Wrestle with the tides of Fate,
From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.

CURFEW

(1845)

This poem was placed at the end of *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*, published in 1845 but dated 1846.

I

Solemnly, mournfully,
Dealing its dole,
The Curfew Bell
Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,
And put out the light,
Toil comes with the morning,
And rest with the night

Dark grow the windows,
And quenched is the fire;
Sound fades into silence,—
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
No sound in the hall!
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all!

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II

The book is completed,
And closed, like the day;
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away.

Dim grows its fancies,
Forgotten they lie,
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die

Song sinks into silence,
The story is told,
The windows are darkened,
The hearth-stone is cold

Darker and darker
The black shadows fall,
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

(1859, 1860)

Cf Longfellow's letter to Emily A—, August 18, 1859

30 "Your letter followed me down here by the sea-side, where I am passing the summer with my three little girls. The oldest is about your age, but as little girls' ages keep changing every year, I can never remember exactly how old she is, and have to ask her mamma, who has a better memory than I have. Her name is Alice, I never forget that. She is a nice girl, and loves poetry almost as much as you do.

35 "The second is Edith, with blue eyes and beautiful golden locks which I sometimes call her 'nankeen hair' to make her laugh. She is a very busy little woman, and wears gray boots.

40 "The youngest is Allegra; which, you know, means merry, and she is the merriest little thing you ever saw,—always singing and laughing all over the house. . . .

45 "I do not say anything about the two boys. They are such noisy fellows it is of no use to talk about them."

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
50 That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,

1807-1882-----HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegria,
And Edith with golden hair

A whisper, and then a silence
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

MY LOST YOUTH

(1855; 1858)

If we exclude the sonnets, this is one of Longfellow's finest short poems. For an account of the origin of the poem and the source of the refrain, see James Taft Hatfield, "Longfellow's Lapland

¹ Bitter waters See Exodus, xv: 23-35.

² A double curse.

Song," *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, XLV, 1188 ff (December, 1930)

Often I think of the beautiful town
5 That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
10 Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts."

15 I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams
20 And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts"

25 I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free,
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
30 And the magic of the sea
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
35 thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
40 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still.
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
45 And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight³ far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!

³ The engagement between the American brig *Enterprise* and the English brig *Boxer* took place off Portland in 1813

And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill.
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts"

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods,
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain,
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts"

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die,
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill.
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known
street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
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And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts"

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
5 And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again
And the strange and beautiful song,
10 The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts."

DANTE
(1845)

This sonnet is given out of its chronological order
that it may be read along with the "Divina Com-
media" sonnets which follow.

20 "Longfellow's sonnets, . . follow the Italian form
used by Milton and Wordsworth rather than the less
difficult English form found in the sonnets of Shake-
speare and other Elizabethans."

25 Tuscan, that wanderest through the realms of
gloom,
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic eyes,
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,
Like Farinata¹ from his fiery tomb
30 Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom;
Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,
What soft compassion glows, as in the skies
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!
Methinks I see thee stand with pallid cheeks
35 By Fra Hilario in his diocese,
As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,
The ascending sunbeams mark the day's de-
crease;
And, as he asks what there the stranger seeks,
40 Thy voice along the cloister whispers
"Peace!"²

¹ See *Inferno*, Canto X

45 ² The Frate Ilario describes an interview he had
with the exiled Dante at the Convent of Corvo:
"Hither he came . . moved either by the religion
of the place, or by some other feeling . . I ques-
tioned him of his wishings and his seekings there.
He moved not, but stood silently contemplating the
columns and arches of the cloister. And again I asked
50 him what he wished, and whom he sought. Then,
slowly turning his head, and looking at the friars
and at me, he answered. 'Peace!'"

DIVINA COMMEDIA

(1864-1867)

Lowell in his essay on Dante followed Longfellow in comparing the *Divine Comedy* to a Catholic cathedral "As the Gothic cathedral, then, is the type of the Christian idea, so is it also of Dante's poem . ." Note that the first two sonnets are, in the published translation, prefixed to the *Inferno*, the third and fourth to the *Purgatory*, and the last two to the *Paradise*

So deeply was Longfellow grieved by the death of his second wife that during a whole decade he wrote little besides his translation of Dante's epic Unlike many other poets, who have alleviated their sorrows by writing about them, Longfellow worked upon his translation in order to avoid brooding

I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er,
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with
thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume,
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass, the votive tapers shine,
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the
woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came,
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy
name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession, and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoe—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied,
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven
above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
 O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
 Above the darkness of the Apennines,
 Forerunner of the day that is to be!
 The voices of the city and the sea,
 The voices of the mountains and the pines,
 Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
 Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
 Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
 Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
 As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
 Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
 In their own language hear the wondrous word,
 And many are amazed and many doubt.

SHAKESPEARE

(1873; 1875)

A vision as of crowded city streets,
 With human life in endless overflow,
 Thunder of thoroughfares, trumpets that blow
 To battle, clamor, in obscure retreats,
 Of sailors landed from their anchored fleets;
 Tolling of bells in turrets, and below
 Voices of children, and bright flowers that
 throw

O'er garden-walls their intermingled sweets!
 This vision comes to me when I unfold
 The volume of the Poet paramount,
 Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone;—
 Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,
 And, crowned with sacred laurel at their fount,
 Placed him as Musagetes¹ on their throne.

NATURE

(1876)

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
 Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
 Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
 And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
 Still gazing at them through the open door,
 Nor wholly reassured and comforted
 By promises of others in their stead,
 Which, though more splendid, may not please
 him more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away
 Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
 Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,

¹ Leader of the Muses; Apollo.

Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
 Being too full of sleep to understand
 How far the unknown transcends the what we
 know.

5

A BALLAD OF THE FRENCH FLEET

(1877, 1877)

This ballad is based on a historical incident In
 1877, when the Old South Church was in danger of
 being destroyed, the Rev Edward Everett Hale, au-
 thor of "The Man without a Country," wrote to
 Longfellow

"You told me that if the spirit moved, you would
 try to sing us a song for the Old South Meeting-
 house I have found such a charming story that I
 think it will really tempt you . The whole story
 of the fleet is in Hutchinson's *Massachusetts*, II, 384,
 385 . . I should think that the assembly in the
 meeting-house in the gale, and then the terror of
 the fleet when the gale struck them, would make a
 ballad—if the spirit moved!"

There is a dramatic appropriateness in placing
 the story in the mouth of Thomas Prince, the pastor
 of the Old South

25

OCTOBER, 1746

MR. THOMAS PRINCE *loquitur*.¹

A fleet with flags arrayed
 Sailed from the port of Brest,
 And the Admiral's ship displayed
 The signal "Steer southwest."
 For this Admiral D'Anville
 Had sworn by cross and crown
 To ravage with fire and steel
 Our helpless Boston Town.

30

35

There were rumors in the street,
 In the houses there was fear
 Of the coming of the fleet,
 And the danger hovering near.
 And while from mouth to mouth
 Spread the tidings of dismay,
 I stood in the Old South,
 Saying humbly. "Let us pray!"

40

45

"O Lord! we would not advise;
 But if in thy Providence
 A tempest should arise
 To drive the French Fleet hence,

50

¹ Speaks.

And scatter it far and wide,
Or sink it in the sea,
We should be satisfied,
And thine the glory be."

This was the prayer I made,
For my soul was all on flame,
And even as I prayed
The answering tempest came;
It came with a mighty power,
Shaking the windows and walls,
And tolling the bell in the tower,
As it tolls at funerals.

The lightning suddenly
Unsheathed its flaming sword,
And I cried "Stand still, and see
The salvation of the Lord!"
The heavens were black with cloud,
The sea was white with hail,
And ever more fierce and loud
Blew the October gale.

The fleet it overtook,
And the broad sails in the van
Like the tents of Cushan shook,
Or the curtains of Midian.
Down on the reeling decks
Crashed the o'erwhelming seas;
Ah, never were there wrecks
So pitiful as these!

Like a potter's vessel broke
The great ships of the line;
They were carried away as a smoke,
Or sank like lead in the brine.
O Lord! before thy path
They vanished and ceased to be,
When thou didst walk in wrath
With thine horses through the sea!

CASTLES IN SPAIN

(1878)

The charm which romantic Europe held for Longfellow is seen in "Nuremberg" and "The Belfry of Bruges," which are better known but hardly superior to "Castles in Spain." Irving, of whose work Longfellow was very fond, wrote in the chapter on "Spanish Romance" in *The Alhambra*:

"In fact, Spain, even at the present day [1832], is a country apart, severed in history, habits, manners, and modes of thinking, from all the rest of Europe

It is a romantic country, but its romance has none of the sentimentality of modern European romance, it is chiefly derived from the brilliant regions of the East, and from the high-minded school of Saracenic chivalry "

5

How much of my young heart, O Spain,
Went out to thee in days of yore!
What dreams romantic filled my brain,
And summoned back to life again
10 The Paladins of Charlemagne,
The Cid Campeador!¹

And shapes more shadowy than these
In the dim twilight half revealed,
15 Phœnician galleys on the seas,
The Roman camps like hives of bees,
The Goth uplifting from his knees
Pelayo on his shield

20 It was these memories perchance,
From annals of remotest old,
That lent the colors of romance
To every trivial circumstance,
And changed the form and countenance
25 Of all that I beheld.

Old towns, whose history lies hid
In monkish chronicle or rhyme,
Burgos, the birthplace of the Cid,
30 Zamora and Valladolid,
Toledo, built and walled amid
The wars of Wamba's time;

The long, straight line of the highway,
35 The distant town that seems so near,
The peasants in the fields, that stay
Their toil to cross themselves and pray,
When from the belfry at midday
The Angelus they hear;

40

White crosses in the mountain pass,
Mules gay with tassels, the loud din
Of muleteers, the tethered ass
That crops the dusty wayside grass,
45 And cavaliers with spurs of brass
Alighting at the inn;

White hamlets hidden in fields of wheat,
White cities slumbering by the sea,

¹ Don Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, national hero of Spain, who fought against the Moors; hero of Corneille's *Le Cid*.

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE-----1830-1870

White sunshine flooding square and street,
Dark mountain-ranges, at whose feet
The river beds are dry with heat,—
All was a dream to me.

Yet something sombre and severe
O'er the enchanted landscape reigned;
A terror in the atmosphere
As if King Philip listened near,
Or Torquemada, the austere,
His ghostly sway maintained.

The softer Andalusian skies
Dispelled the sadness and the gloom;
There Cadiz by the seaside lies,
And Seville's orange-orchards rise,
Making the land a paradise
Of beauty and of bloom.

There Cordova is hidden among
The palm, the olive, and the vine;
Gem of the South, by poets sung,
And in whose Mosque Almanzor hung
As lamps the bells that once had rung
At Compostella's shrine.

But over all the rest supreme,
The star of stars, the cynosure,
The artist's and the poet's theme,
The young man's vision, the old man's dream,— 30
Granada by its winding stream,
The city of the Moor!

And there the Alhambra still recalls
Aladdin's palace of delight
Allah il Allah! through its halls
Whispers the fountain as it falls,
The Darro darts beneath its walls,
The hills with snow are white.

Ah yes, the hills are white with snow,
And cold with blasts that bite and freeze;

But in the happy vale below
The orange and the pomegranate grow,
And wafts of air toss to and fro
The blossoming almond trees.

5 The Vega cleft by the Xenil,
The fascination and allure
Of the sweet landscape chains the will;
The traveller lingers on the hill,
10 His parted lips are breathing still
The last sigh of the Moor.

How like a ruin overgrown
With flowers that hide the rents of time,
15 Stands now the Past that I have known,
Castles in Spain, not built of stone
But of white summer clouds, and blown
Into this little mist of rhyme!

20

THE CROSS OF SNOW (1879; 1886)

25 This is one of the few poems in which Longfellow
writes of his deeper emotions.

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its
head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
35 The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West,
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
40 These eighteen years, through all the changing
scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809-1894

No, my friends, I go (always other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations.

—HOLMES, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, of excellent clerical and merchant stock, was born in the "old Gambrel-rooted House" in Cambridge, Mass., on August 29. His father, the Rev. Abiel Holmes, author of *American Annals* (1805), was minister of the First Church in Boston in the days before it became Unitarian. The young Holmes did not long share the Calvinistic views of his father, who wished the son to become a minister. In later life Holmes remarked: "I might have become a minister myself, for aught I know, if [a certain clergyman] had not looked and talked so like an undertaker." By the time Holmes entered Harvard College, it had become Unitarian; and he found there influences hostile to his father's orthodoxy. Like Emerson and Parkman, Holmes was always in rebellion against Calvinistic theology.

After his graduation in 1829, Holmes, like Lowell, not knowing what else to do, studied law for a year, and then decided to become a physician. This was at a time when, as readers of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* will remember, medicine was just beginning to be a science and carried with it no very high social standing. Holmes spent two years (1833-1835) in medical study in Paris. It is generally supposed that his stay abroad had little effect upon the young New Englander, but there are times when his wit and his scepticism remind one of the great Voltaire. Holmes did not long practice medicine. From 1838 to 1840 he was Professor of Anatomy at Dartmouth College. For years he taught the same subject at Harvard and did not finally retire until 1882. He was an excellent teacher. (See the essay, "Oliver Wendell Holmes," in President C. W. Eliot's *A Late Harvest*.) The last class period in the morning schedule was always given to Holmes because he was the only instructor who could hold the attention of the weary students. A certain Dr. Cheever, one of Holmes's former students, gives some account of Holmes's methods of teaching:

"He enters, and is greeted with a mighty shout and stamp of applause. Then silence, and there begins a charming hour of description, analysis, simile, anecdote, harmless pun, which clothes the dry bones with poetic imagery, enlivens a hard and fatiguing day with humor, and brightens to the tired listener the details of a difficult though interesting study."

Holmes took a very keen interest in professional matters and was active in forming the American Medical Association. His best claim to medical research, an essay on "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever," was published in 1843. For years Holmes regarded himself as a physician and teacher rather than as a man of letters. The student who knows something of medicine will find Holmes's medical poems and essays worth reading.

Until he was nearly fifty, Holmes wrote little besides occasional verse. A poem, "Old Ironsides," written soon after his graduation, was widely copied. He published a volume of *Poems* in 1836. Still earlier, in 1831 and 1832, he had published in *The New England Magazine* two *Autocrat* essays, but he did not write others until 1857. Until that year he was known, outside of professional circles, as a charming talker, a lyceum lecturer, and a writer of occasional verse. When James Russell Lowell undertook the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857, he "made it a condition precedent" that Holmes should be "the first contributor to be engaged." Holmes, who felt himself "outside of the charmed circle drawn around the scholars and poets of Cambridge and Concord," was surprised at Lowell's insistence. He awoke, as he says, from "a kind of literary lethargy"; and the first result was the series of papers which, after their publication in the *Atlantic*, made up his book, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858). Other books in the series followed: *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1860), *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1872); and *Over the Teacups* (1891). Holmes's "medicated novels" are of much the same type as the Breakfast Table series. The earliest and best is *Elsie Venner* (1861).

With the possible exception of Lowell, Holmes was the most brilliant talker in the New England group. Lowell himself in later life wrote from London. "I have never seen society, on the whole, so good as I used to meet at our Saturday Club." Holmes's conversation tended to monologue. "Now, James, let me talk and don't interrupt me," he said on one occasion when Lowell was critical. His conversation was perhaps better than his books, but it was of the same quality. How one would like to have heard the little man—he was only five feet three inches tall—discussing the intellectual supremacy of Boston or the latest fad in medicine or his hobbies, boxing and horse-racing!

Holmes was thoroughly aristocratic and provincial, but not in an objectionable way. He was abroad only twice in his life, and his asthma kept him from traveling widely in his own country. He was, with the possible exception of Lowell, the best representative in literature of that "Brahmin Caste of New England" which he describes so well in the first chapter of *Elsie Venner*. The kind of prose and verse which he wrote could hardly have come from any other than a cultivated, aristocratic society such as was found in Boston.

"In Holmes's make-up," says his biographer, John T. Morse, Jr., "conservatism in things political and social was curiously compounded with the progressive tendency in religious thought." He was not greatly in sympathy with the reform projects of his friend Lowell. (See his long letter to Lowell, November 29, 1846, in Morse's *Life and Letters*, I, 295-303.) His father had lived in Georgia, and Holmes—although the Civil War roused him to fiery patriotism—took no active part in the Abolition movement. He lived to write a life of Emerson for the American Men of Letters series, but he was too little the mystic and idealist to have any strong sympathy with Transcendentalism. In literary matters he was conservative also. He was not greatly impressed by the intense literary nationalism of the 'twenties and 'thirties. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* says:

"When young America demanded that the political revolution which separated the Old and the New Worlds should have its literary counterpart in a similar revolt, Holmes threw all his influence into the opposite scale. He urged, with keen satire as well as with the force of example, that even a Republic must recognize the laws of conventional decorum, and that those who enter the Temple of the Muses outrage propriety if they ostentatiously flaunt their working-dress."

From such a writer one could not expect approval of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Holmes's reputation has suffered from indiscriminating and over-patriotic American critics who might have profited from Lowell's warning in the case of Bryant:

*"But, my friends, you'll endanger the life of your client,
By attempting to stretch him up into a giant."*

Holmes is not a major figure in our literature, for the literary types which he wrote are not major but distinctly minor. *Vers de société* and occasional verse may be altogether delightful reading, but their poetic quality, as he well knew, is seldom high. In Holmes's lifetime Frederick Locker-Lampson, in the preface to his admirable *Lyra Elegantiarum. A Collection of Some of the Best Vers de Société and Vers d'Occasion in the English Language*, referred to Holmes as "perhaps the best living writer of this species of verse." On August 3, 1865, Holmes wrote to Lowell in regard to his own occasional verse:

"I hold it to be a gift of a certain value to be able to give that slight passing spasm of pleasure which a few ringing couplets often cause, read at the right moment. Though they are for the most part to poetry as the beating of a drum or the tinkling of a triangle is to the harmony of a band, yet it is not everybody who can get their limited significance out of these humble instruments."

Vers de société, although successfully written by many English and American poets, has no generally accepted English name. It has been variously called "familiar verse," "gentle verse," "patrician rhymes," etc. No one has defined the term better than did Locker-Lampson in the preface to his *Lyra Elegantiarum*:

"In his [the Editor's] judgment genuine *vers de société* and *vers d'occasion* should be short, elegant, refined, and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high; it should be idiomatic, and rather in the conversational key, the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness. . . .

". . . the two qualities of brevity and buoyancy are absolutely essential. The poem may be tintured with a well-bred philosophy, it may be gay and gallant, it may be playfully malicious or tenderly ironical, it may display lively banter, and it may be sarcastically facetious; it may even, considering it merely as a work of art, be pagan in its philosophy, or trifling in its tone, but it must never be ponderous or commonplace."

The standard editions of Holmes's works are the Riverside (1891) for his prose and the Cambridge (1895) for his poems. The standard biography is *The Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (1896) in two volumes by John T. Morse, Jr. A later and briefer life is M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *Holmes of the Breakfast Table* (1939). See also Mr. Howe's *Memories of a Hostess* (1922), Chapter III, "Dr. Holmes, the Friend and Neighbor." Catherine Drinker

Bowen's *Yankee from Olympus: Justice O. W. Holmes and His Family* (1944) gives a vivid but not very sympathetic picture of Dr Holmes. S. I. Hayakawa and Howard Mumford Jones (eds.), *Oliver Wendell Holmes: Representative Selections* (1939), in the American Writers Series, contains a good working bibliography and an excellent introductory essay. In *The Psychiatric Novels of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (2nd ed., 1946) Dr. Clarence P. Oberndorf has emphasized the modernness of Dr. Holmes's studies in a field little known in his time.

PROGRAMME*

(1874; 1874)

This poem, which was written to introduce Holmes's *Songs of Many Seasons* (1874), is placed first because it indicates so well the circumstances under which many of his poems were composed.

READER—gentle—if so be
Such still live, and live for me,
Will it please you to be told
What my tenscore pages hold?

Here are verses that in spite
Of myself I needs must write,
Like the wine that oozes first
When the unsqueezed grapes have burst.

Here are angry lines, "too hard!"
Says the soldier, battle-scarred.
Could I smile his scars away
I would blot the bitter lay.

Written with a knitted brow,
Read with placid wonder now.
Throbb'd such passion in my heart?
Did his wounds once really smart?

Here are varied strains that sing
All the changes life can bring,
Songs when joyous friends have met,
Songs the mourner's tears have wet.

See the banquet's dead bouquet,
Fair and fragrant in its day;
Do they read the selfsame lines,—
He that fasts and he that dines?

Year by year, like milestones placed,
Mark the record Friendship traced.
Prisoned in the walls of time
Life has notched itself in rhyme:

As its seasons slid along,
Every year a notch of song,
From the June of long ago,
When the rose was full in blow,

Till the scarlet sage has come
And the cold chrysanthemum.
Read, but not to praise or blame;
Are not all our hearts the same?

For the rest, they take their chance,—
Some may pay a passing glance,
Others,—well, they served a turn,—
Wherefore written, would you learn?

Not for glory, not for pelf,
Not, be sure, to please myself,
Not for any meaner ends,—
Always "by request of friends."

Here's the cousin of a king,—
Would I do the civil thing?
Here's the first-born of a queen;
Here's a slant-eyed Mandarin.

Would I polish off Japan?
Would I greet this famous man,
Prince or Prelate, Sheik or Shah?—
Figaro çî and Figaro là!

Would I just this once comply?—
So they teased and teased till I
(Be the truth at once confessed)
Wavered—yielded—did my best.

Turn my pages,—never mind
If you like not all you find;

* The selections from Holmes which follow are reprinted by permission of, and by arrangement with, the Houghton Mifflin Company.

Think not all the grains are gold
Sacramento's sand-banks hold.

Every kernel has its shell,
Every chime its harshest bell,
Every face its weariest look,
Every shelf its emptiest book,

Every field its leanest sheaf,
Every book its dullest leaf,
Every leaf its weakest line,—
Shall it not be so with mine?

Best for worst shall make amends,
Find us, keep us, leave us friends
Till, perchance, we meet again.
Benedicite—Amen!

OLD IRONSIDES

(1830, 1830)

This poem, which is as spirited as the martial lyrics of Thomas Campbell, was written by Holmes in 1830 while he was studying law at Harvard. The historic frigate *Constitution*, which had fought the pirates in the Mediterranean and the British in the War of 1812, was about to be destroyed—as of course obsolete and worn-out warships almost invariably are. Holmes's poem, published in the Boston *Daily Advertiser* and republished in many other newspapers, helped to create a public protest which caused the order to be countermanded. Curtis Hidden Page remarks: "This is probably the only case in which a government policy was changed by the verses of a college student." The *Constitution* is still preserved as a historic relic of the early American navy.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky,
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar,—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,

No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee,—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave,
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

MY AUNT

(1831)

Cf. the chapter in Holmes's *Elsie Venner* on "The Apollinean Female Institute"

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown,
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone,
I know it hurts her,—though she looks
As cheerful as she can,
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!
Her hair is almost gray;
Why will she train that winter curl
In such a spring-like way?
How can she lay her glasses down,
And say she reads as well,
When through a double convex lens
She just makes out to spell?

Her father—grandpapa! forgive
This erring lip its smiles—
Vowed she should make the finest girl
Within a hundred miles;
He sent her to a stylish school;
'Twas in her thirteenth June;
And with her, as the rules required,
"Two towels and a spoon"

They braced my aunt against a board,
To make her straight and tall;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
To make her light and small;

They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
 They screwed it up with pins,—
 Oh, never mortal suffered more
 In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
 My grandsire brought her back
 (By daylight, lest some rabid youth
 Might follow on the track),
 "Ah!" said my grandsire, as he shook
 Some powder in his pan,
 "What could this lovely creature do
 Against a desperate man!"

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,
 Nor bandit cavalcade,
 Tore from the trembling father's arms
 His all-accomplished maid.
 For her how happy had it been!
 And Heaven had spared to me
 To see one sad, ungathered rose
 On my ancestral tree.

THE LAST LEAF

(1831 or 1832; 1833)

The poem was suggested by the sight of a well-known Boston figure, Major Thomas Melville, the paternal grandfather of Herman Melville the novelist. Holmes explains

"His aspect among the crowds of a later generation reminded me of a withered leaf which has held to its stem through the storms of autumn and winter, and finds itself still clinging to its bough while the new growths of spring are bursting their buds and spreading their foliage all around it. I make this explanation for the benefit of those who have been puzzled by the lines,

*The last leaf upon the tree
 In the spring."*

As Holmes goes on to suggest, the stanzaic form perhaps owes something to the short lines in Thomas Campbell's "The Battle of the Baltic":

*"By thy wild and stormy steep,
 Elsinore."*

Holmes obviously intended that his metrical form should suggest the tapping of the old man's cane. In "My Mistress's Boots" Frederick Locker-Lampson, who has already been mentioned as an admirer of Holmes, uses the same stanza to suggest the light patter of a woman's shoes:

*"They nearly strike me dumb,
 And I tremble when they come
 Pit-a-pat
 This palpitation means
 That these Boots are Geraldine's—
 Think of that!"*

5

Holmes, who had outlived all the other New England writers of his time, in 1894 wrote to his publishers:

10 "I have lasted long enough to serve as an illustration of my own poem. It was with a smile on my lips that I wrote it, I cannot read it without a sigh of tender remembrance."

15 In his *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers* (1884), J. C. Derby comments on Lincoln's admiration of "The Last Leaf"

20 "As he finished this verse [stanza], 'The mossy marbles rest,' etc, he said in his emphatic way, 'For pure pathos, in my judgment, there is nothing finer than those six lines in the English language.'"

I saw him once before,
 As he passed by the door,
 And again
 25 The pavement stones resound,
 As he totters o'er the ground
 With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
 Ere the pruning-knife of Time
 Cut him down,
 Not a better man was found
 By the Crier on his round
 Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
 And he looks at all he meets
 Sad and wan,¹
 And he shakes his feeble head,
 40 That it seems as if he said,
 "They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
 On the lips that he has prest
 45 In their bloom,

¹ Mrs. Annie Fields quotes Holmes as saying, ". . . when . . . my first volume was about to appear, Mrs. Folsom saw the sheets and fortunately at the very last moment for correction discovered that I had made 'forlorn' rhyme with 'gone,' and out of her own head and without having time to consult with me she substituted 'sad and wan'" (Howe, *Memories of a Hostess*, p. 43).

And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow,

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,

And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

(1858)

Holmes regarded this as his best poem, and most nineteenth-century readers agreed with him. The reader of today, however, is more likely to agree with Parrington's estimate: "*The One-Hoss Shay* is worth a volume of such pretty moralizing." It appears at the end of the fourth section of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. The prose paragraph which immediately precedes the poem reads in part

"If you will look into Roget's Bridgewater Treatise, you will find a figure of one of these shells [the Pearly Nautilus], and a section of it. The last will show you the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral. Can you find no lesson in this?"

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their
streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped its growing shell,

Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt
unsealed!

5 Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil,
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
10 Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the
old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by
thee,
15 Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
20 While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a
voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
25 As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
30 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY"

A LOGICAL STORY

(1858)

In *A Literary History of America* (1900) Barrett Wendell expressed the opinion that Holmes's poem was intended as a satire directed against the unanswerable logic of Jonathan Edwards's *The Freedom of the Will*, which was first published the year before the Deacon completed his one-horse chaise. The Poet's son, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, however, could not recall that his father ever said anything to justify Wendell's interpretation, and later scholars have abandoned it. The point of the story applies to much logical writing published since the poem was written. Dr. Holmes gave in a prose essay his none too sympathetic estimate of Jonathan Edwards.

In *The Autocrat* the poem is preceded by the following paragraph:

"I am willing,—I said,—to exercise your ingenuity in a rational and contemplative manner.—No, I do not proscribe certain forms of philosophical speculation which involve an approach to the absurd or the ludicrous, such as you may find, for example, in the folio of the Reverend Father Thomas Sanchez, in his famous Disputations, 'De Sancto Matrimonio.' I will therefore turn this levity of yours to profit by reading you a rhymed problem, wrought out by my friend the Professor."

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,

That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,

In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
5 And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't wear
out.

But the Deacon swore (as deacons do,
10 With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell yeou")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry roaun',
It should be so built that it *couldn't* break
daown
15 "Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain,
'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain, is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

20 So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
That was for spokes and floor and sills,
He sent for lancewood to make the thulls;
25 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest
trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these,
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
30 Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
35 Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
40 That was the way he "put her through"
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
45 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

50 EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound

Eighteen hundred increased by ten,—
 “Hahnsum kerridge” they called it then
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came,—
 Running as usual, much the same
 Thirty and forty at last arrive,
 And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE

Little of all we value here
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
 Without both feeling and looking queer
 In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
 (This is a moral that runs at large;
 Take it—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the earthquake-day,—
 There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
 A geneal flavor of mild decay,
 But nothing local, as one may say.
 There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
 Had made it so like in every part
 That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
 For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
 And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
 And the panels just as strong as the floor,
 And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
 And the back crossbar as strong as the fore,
 And spring and axle and hub *encore*
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
 In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
 This morning the parson takes a drive.
 Now, small boys, get out of the way!
 Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
 Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
 “Huddup!” said the parson—Off went they.
 The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
 Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
 And what the—Moses—was coming next.
 All at once the horse stood still,
 Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
 First a shiver, and then a thrill,
 Then something decidedly like a spill,—
 And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
 At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
 Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!

What do you think the parson found,
 When he got up and stared around?
 The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
 As if it had been to the mill and ground!

You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
 How it went to pieces all at once,—
 All at once, and nothing first,—
 Just as bubbles do when they burst

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay
 Logic is logic That's all I say.

CONTENTMENT

(1858)

This poem, which also appears in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, was probably influenced by John Quincy Adams's poem, “The Wants of Man,” which begins

*“Man wants but little here below,
 Nor wants that little long”
 'Tis not with me exactly so;
 But 'tis so in the song
 My wants are many, and, if told,
 Would muster many a score,
 And were each wish a mint of gold,
 I still should long for more*

*What first I want is daily bread—
 And canvas-backs—and wine—
 And all the realms of nature spread
 Before me, when I dine
 Four courses scarcely can provide
 My appetite to quell,
 With four choice cooks from France beside
 To dress my dinner well*

In his *History of American Literature* Percy H Boynton suggests that Holmes's satire is directed against Thoreau

“Man wants but little here below.”

Little I ask; my wants are few;
 I only wish a hut of stone
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do)
 That I may call my own;—
 And close at hand is such a one,
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
 Three courses are as good as ten,—
 If Nature can subsist on three,
 Thank Heaven for three Amen!
 I always thought cold victual nice;—
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land,—
 Give me a mortgage here and there,—
 Some good bank-stock, some note of hand
 Or trifling railroad share,—
 I only ask that Fortune send
 A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
 And titles are but empty names;
 I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo,—
 But only near St. James,
 I'm very sure I should not care
 To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles, 'tis a sin
 To care for such unfruitful things;—
 One good-sized diamond in a pin,—
 Some, *not so large*, in rings,—
 A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
 Will do for me,—I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire
 (Good, heavy silks are never dear);—
 I own perhaps I *might* desire
 Some shawls of true Cashmere,—
 Some narrow crapes of China silk,
 Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
 So fast that folks must stop and stare;
 An easy gait—two forty-five—
 Suits me; I do not care,—
 Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
 Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
 Titians and Raphaels three or four,—
 I love so much their style and tone,
 One Turner, and no more
 5 (A landscape,—foreground golden dirt,—
 The sunshine painted with a squirt)

Of books but few,—some fifty score
 For daily use, and bound for wear;
 10 The rest upon an upper floor,—
 Some *little* luxury *there*
 Of red morocco's gilded gleam
 And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems,—such things as these,
 Which others often show for pride,
 I value for their power to please,
 And selfish churls deride,—
 One Stradivarius, I confess,
 20 Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
 Nor ape the glittering upstart fool,—
 Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
 25 But *all* must be of buhl?
 Give grasping pomp its double share,—
 I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
 30 Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
 If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
 I shall not miss them *much*,—
 Too grateful for the blessing lent
 Of simple tastes and mind content!

THE BOYS

(1859; 1859)

For nearly forty years Holmes brought to the annual reunion of his class (Harvard, 1829), a poem written for the occasion. Perhaps the best of these are "The Boys" and "Bill and Joe." For the members of Holmes's class, see the Cambridge edition of his poems; see also M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *Memories of a Hostess*, pp. 46-47.

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
 If there has, take him out, without making a noise.
 Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spitel
 Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

5

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?
 He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!
 "Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white* if we please;
 Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
 Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake!
 We want some new garlands for those we have shed—
 And these are white roses in place of the read 5

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
 Of talking (in public) as if we were old —
 That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge",¹
 It's a neat little fiction,—of course it's all fudge 10

That fellow's the "Speaker"²—the one on the right;
 "Mr Mayor,"³ my young one, how are you to-night?
 That's our "Member of Congress,"⁴ we say when we chaff,
 There's the "Reverend"⁵ What's his name?—don't make me laugh. 15

That boy⁶ with the grave mathematical look
 Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
 And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true*!
 So they chose him right in, a good joke it was, too! 20

There's a boy,⁷ we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
 That could harness a team with a logical chain,
 When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
 We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire." 25

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—
 Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith,⁸
 But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—
 Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!" 30

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun:
 But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done,
 The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
 And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all! 35

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—
 And I sometimes have asked,—Shall we ever be men?
 Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
 Till the last dear companion drops smiling away? 40

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
 The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
 And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
 Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

¹ George T Bigelow, Chief Justice of Massachusetts

² Francis B Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives

³ G W Richardson, of Worcester, Mass

⁴ George L Davis

⁵ The Rev James Freeman Clarke.

⁶ Professor Benjamin Pierce.

⁷ B. R Curtis, Justice of the U. S Supreme Court.

⁸ The Rev. Samuel Francis Smith, author of "America."

A SUN-DAY HYMN

(1859)

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn,
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love, 20
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

DOROTHY Q

A FAMILY PORTRAIT

(1871)

"Dorothy," said Holmes, "was the daughter of Judge Edmund Quincy, and the niece of Josiah Quincy, junior, the young patriot and orator who died just before the American Revolution, of which he was one of the most eloquent and effective promoters."

Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air,
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed,
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.

Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
5 Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell,—
One whose best was not over well,
10 Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
15 Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—
Dorothy Q was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
20 England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

25 O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring,—
30 All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

35 What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
40 The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's Yes:
45 Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
50 There were tones in the voice that whispered
then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
 Your images hover,—and here we are,
 Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—
 Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,—
 A goodly record for Time to show
 Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—
 Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
 For the tender whisper that bade me live?
 It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
 It will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
 And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
 And gild with a rhyme your household name;
 So you shall smile on us brave and bright
 As first you greeted the morning's light,
 And live untroubled by woes and fears
 Through a second youth of a hundred years.

from THE AUTOCRAT OF THE
 BREAKFAST-TABLE (1857-1858)

The Autocrat, which is Holmes's best-known prose work, first appeared in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Through it runs a slight thread of story but not enough to justify one in calling it a novel. The style is that of the familiar essay, and the Autocrat's talk is very like that of Dr. Holmes himself. It is rich in such wit and wisdom as we should expect from a shrewd and kindly Boston Brahmin.

"*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* is one of the most highly civilized books ever written in America. It is a book in which the seeds of factual knowledge spring up into thought, and thought bears the fruit of wisdom. It is the product of an epoch and a place. It is a masterpiece, a triumph, of wit" (Odell Shepard in *Literary History of the United States*, 1949, I, 600).

I

I was just going to say, when I was interrupted, that one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. All economical and practical wisdom is an extension or variation of the following arithmetical formula: $2 + 2 = 4$. Every philosophical proposition has the more general character of the expression $a + b = c$. We are mere operatives, empirics, and egotists, until we learn to think in letters instead of figures.

They all stared. There is a divinity student lately come among us to whom I commonly address remarks like the above, allowing him

to take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions are involved. He abused his liberty on this occasion by presuming to say that Leibnitz had the same observation.—No, sir, I replied, he has not. But he said a mighty good thing about mathematics, that sounds something like it, and you found it, *not in the original*, but quoted by Dr Thomas Reid. I will tell the company what he did say, one of these days . . .

—What are the great faults of conversation? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else;—long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain *ultima* of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

—Do you mean to say the pun-question is not clearly settled in your minds? Let me lay down the law upon the subject. Life and language are alike sacred. Homicide and *verbiicide*—that is, violent treatment of a word with fatal results to its legitimate meaning, which is its life—are alike forbidden. Manslaughter, which is the meaning of the one, is the same as man's laughter, which is the end of the other. A pun is *prima facie* an insult to the person you are talking with. It implies utter indifference to or sublime contempt for his remarks, no matter how serious. I speak of total depravity, and one says all that is written on the subject is deep raving. I have committed my self-respect by talking with such a person. I should like to commit him, but cannot, because he is a nuisance. Or I speak of geological convulsions, and he asks me what was the cosine of Noah's ark; also, whether the Deluge was not a deal huger than any modern inundation.

A pun does not commonly justify a blow in return. But if a blow were given for such cause, and death ensued, the jury would be judges both of the facts and of the pun, and might, if the latter were of an aggravated character, return a verdict of justifiable homicide. Thus, in a case lately decided before Miller, J., Doe presented Roe a subscription paper, and urged the claims of suffering humanity. Roe replied by asking, When charity was like a top? It was in evidence that Doe preserved a dignified silence. Roe then said, "When it begins to hum." Doe then—and not till then—struck Roe, and his head happening to hit a bound volume of the Monthly Rag-Bag and Stolen Miscellany, intense mortification ensued, with a fatal result. The chief laid down his notions of the law to his brother justices, who unanimously replied, "Jest so." The chief rejoined, that no man should jest so without being punished for it, and charged for the prisoner, who was acquitted, and the pun ordered to be burned by the sheriff. The bound volume was forfeited as a deodand, but not claimed.

People that make puns are like wanton boys that put coppers on the railroad tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little trick may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism. . . .

—What if, instead of talking this morning, I should read you a copy of verses, with critical remarks by the author? Any of the company can retire that like.

ALBUM VERSES

*When Eve had led her lord away,
And Cain had killed his brother,
The stars and flowers, the poets say,
Agreed with one another,*

*To cheat the cunning tempter's art,
And teach the race its duty,
By keeping on its wicked heart
Their eyes of light and beauty.*

*A million sleepless lids, they say,
Will be at least a warning;
And so the flowers would watch by day,
The stars from eve to morning.*

*On hill and prairie, field and lawn,
Their dewy eyes upturning,
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn
Till western skies are burning*

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*Alas! each hour of daylight tells
A tale of shame so crushing,
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,
And some are always blushing*

*But when the patient stars look down
On all their light discovers,
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,
The lips of lying lovers,*

*They try to shut their saddening eyes,
And in the vain endeavor
We see them twinkling in the skies,
And so they wink forever.*

What do you think of these verses, my friends?—Is that piece an impromptu? said my landlady's daughter (Aet. 19+ Tender-eyed blonde Long ringlets Cameo pin Gold pencil-case on a chain Locket Bracelet. Album. Auto-graph Book Accordeon Reads Byron, Tupper, and Sylvanus Cobb, Junior, while her mother makes the puddings. Says "Yes?" when you tell her anything) —*Oui et non, ma petite*,—Yes and no, my child. Five of the seven verses were written offhand, the other two took a week,—that is, were hanging round the desk in a ragged, forlorn, unrhymed condition as long as that. All poets will tell you just such stories. *C'est le DERNIER pas qui coûte*¹ Don't you know how hard it is for some people to get out of a room after their visit is really over? They want to be off, and you want to have them off, but they don't know how to manage it. One would think they had been built in your parlor or study, and were waiting to be launched. I have contrived a sort of ceremonial inclined plane for such visitors, which being lubricated with certain smooth phrases, I back them down, metaphorically speaking, stern-foremost, into their "native element," the great ocean of out-doors. Well, now, there are poems as hard to get rid of as these rural visitors. They come in glibly, use up all the serviceable rhymes, *day, ray, beauty, duty, skies, eyes, other, brother, mountain, fountain*, and the like, and so they go on until you think it is time for the wind-up, and the wind-up won't come on any terms. So they lie about until you get sick of the sight of them, and end by thrusting some cold scrap of a final couplet upon them, and turning them out of

¹ It is the last step which is difficult.

doors. I suspect a good many "impromptus" could tell just such a story as the above—Here turning to our landlady, I used an illustration which pleased the company much at the time, and has since been highly commended. "Madam," I said, "you can pour three gills and three quarters of honey from that pint jug, if it is full, in less than one minute; but, Madam, you could not empty that last quarter of a gill, though you were turned into a marble Hebe, and held the vessel upside down for a thousand years "

One gets tired to death of the old, old rhymes, such as you see in that copy of verses,—which I don't mean to abuse, or to praise either I always feel as if I were a cobbler, putting new top-leathers to an old pair of boot-soles and bodies, when I am fitting sentiments to these venerable jingles.

.	.	.	.	.	.	youth
.	.	.	.	.	.	morning
.	.	.	.	.	.	truth
.	.	.	.	.	.	waning.

Nine tenths of the "Juvenile Poems" written spring out of the above musical and suggestive coincidences.

"Yes?" said our landlady's daughter.

I did not address the following remark to her, and I trust, from her limited range of reading, she will never see it; I said it softly to my next neighbor

When a young female wears a flat circular side-curl, gummed on each temple,—when she walks with a male, not arm in arm, but his arm against the back of hers,—and when she says "Yes?" with the note of interrogation, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the "feller" was you saw her with.

"What were you whispering?" said the daughter of the house, moistening her lips, as she spoke, in a very engaging manner.

"I was only laying down a principle of social diagnosis."

"Yes?" - - -

—Self-made men?—Well, yes Of course every body likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands? It took him a good many years to

build it, and one could see that it was a little out of plumb, and a little wavy in outline, and a little queer and uncertain in general aspect A regular hand could certainly have built a better house, but it was a very good house for a "self-made" carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit, if that is all, than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French-polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter. The right of strict social discrimination of all things and persons, according to their merits, native or acquired, is one of the most precious republican privileges. I take the liberty to exercise it when I say that, *other things being equal*, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family.

What do I mean by a man of family?—O I'll give you a general idea of what I mean Let us give him a first-rate fit out, it costs us nothing.

Four or five generations of gentlemen and gentlewomen, among them a member of his Majesty's Council for the Province, a Governor or so, one or two Doctors of Divinity, a member of Congress, not later than the time of long boots with tassels

Family portraits The member of the Council, by Smibert. The great merchant-uncle, by Copley, full length, sitting in his arm-chair, in a velvet cap and flowered robe, with a globe by him, to show the range of his commercial transactions, and letters with large red seals lying round, one directed conspicuously to The Honorable, etc., etc Greatgrandmother, by the same artist, brown satin, lace very fine, hands superlative, grand old lady, stiffish, but imposing. Her mother, artist unknown; flat, angular, hanging sleeves, parrot on fist. A pair of Stuarts;² viz, 1 A superb, full-blown, mediæval

² Barrett Wendell points out the fact that, according to Holmes's test, such men of family must have been very few in Boston: "The men whom Copley painted were mostly ruined by the Revolution; the men whom Stuart painted were those who, as the country subsided into peace, were able to establish fortunes which have lasted" (*A Literary History of America*, 1900, p. 242).

gentleman, with a fiery dash of Tory blood in his veins, tempered down with that of a fine old rebel grandmother, and warmed up with the best of old India Madeira; his face is one flame of ruddy sunshine, his ruffled shirt rushes out of his bosom with an impetuous generosity, as if it would drag his heart after it, and his smile is good for twenty thousand dollars to the Hospital, besides ample bequests to all relatives and dependents 2 Lady of the same, remarkable cap, high waist, as in time of Empire, bust *à la Josephine*, wisps of curls, like celery-tips, at sides of forehead, complexion clear and warm, like rose-cordial. As for the miniatures by Malbone, we don't count them in the gallery.

Books, too, with the names of old college-students in them,—family names,—you will find them at the head of their respective classes in the days when students took rank on the catalogue from their parents' condition Elzevirs, with the Latinized appellations of youthful progenitors, and *Hic liber est meus* on the title-page. A set of Hogarth's original plates Pope, original edition, 15 volumes, London, 1717. Barrow on the lower shelves, in folio Tillotson on the upper, in a little dark platoon of octodecimos.

Some family silver; a string of wedding and funeral rings; the arms of the family curiously blazoned, the same in worsted, by a maiden aunt.

If a man of family has an old place to keep these things in, furnished with claw-footed chairs and black mahogany tables, and tall beveled mirrors, and stately upright cabinets, his outfit is complete.

No, my friends, I go (always, other things

being equal for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in a library All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy Do you suppose our dear *didascalos*³ over there ever read *Poli Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli Lexicon*, while he was growing up to their stature? Not he, but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated through the bat's handle in the Arabian story I tell you he is at home wherever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. No self-made man feels so. One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a boor or a shabby fellow One may have none of them, and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription. But I still insist on my democratic liberty of choice, and I go for the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerreotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two. ---

³ "Our dear *didascalos*" was meant for Professor James Russell Lowell, now Minister to England. It requires the union of exceptional native gifts and generations of training to bring the "natural man" of New England to the completeness of scholarly manhood, such as that which adds new distinction to the name he bears, already remarkable for its successive generations of eminent citizens.

"Self-made" is imperfectly made, or education is a superfluity and a failure (Author's note)

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807 - 1892

*O Freedom' if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine*
—WHITTIER, "Proem."

*A fervor of mind which knows no separation
'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration.*
—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *A Fable for Critics*.

Whittier, the son of a Quaker farmer, was born in the East Parish of Haverhill, Mass., on December 17, 1807—in the same year as Longfellow, whom he outlived ten years. Whittier's parents, although Quakers, held something like a leading social position in the village community, and their home, we are told, "afforded something more than the average comfort of farm life." That, however, could not have been much. As an old man, Whittier wrote to a little Pennsylvania girl who had inquired about his early life:

"I think . . . I found about equal satisfaction in an old rural home, with the shifting panorama of the seasons, in reading the few books within my reach, and dreaming of something wonderful and grand somewhere in the future: . . . I had at that time a great thirst for knowledge and little means to gratify it. The beauty of outward nature early impressed me, and the moral and spiritual beauty of the holy lives I read of in the Bible and other books also affected me with a sense of my falling short and longing for a better state."

The father had little sympathy with the young poet's literary aspirations, but his sisters encouraged him. The small family library was religious rather than literary. One of his teachers, Joshua Coffin, introduced him to the poems of Robert Burns, who proved a powerful influence, as Whittier tells us in his poem, "Burns."

It was as a local poet that Whittier began, and the wonder is that he ever became anything better. His early verses, most of which he was later ashamed of, were published in country newspapers. The young William Lloyd Garrison, not yet the fiery Abolitionist agitator, pub-

lished some of these, with flattering comments, in the Newburyport, Mass., *Free Press*. When Garrison took the trouble to look up the boy poet and advised him to secure an education, the elder Whittier is reported to have said, "Sir, poetry will not give him bread." But since Greenleaf had injured his health by farm work too heavy for his slender frame, the father consented to let the boy go to school. So Whittier attended the Haverhill Academy for two terms, working his way by making slippers, posting ledgers for a local merchant, and doing other odd jobs that came to hand. All the while he was writing numerous verses and printing them in local newspapers. Not being able to go to college, as practically all the other important New England writers did, he engaged in editorial work on newspapers and magazines of the lesser sort, in Boston, Hartford, and other places. Periodically, however, his health obliged him to give up his work and return to the farm to recuperate. In 1831 he published his *Legends of New England, in Prose and Verse*. His keen interest in New England history and legend was to inspire some excellent ballads in his maturer years.

Long dissatisfied with slavery, which American Quakers had consistently opposed, Whittier in 1833 engaged in the Abolition movement with all the zeal of a religious convert. When in that year he published at his own expense a pamphlet, *Justice and Expediency*, he knew that it might mean the end of his poetic career as well as of his political ambitions, which were strong. In later life the poet said to an ambitious youth, "My lad, if thou wouldst win success, join thyself to some unpopular but noble cause." In 1833, even in New England, the antislavery cause was extremely unpopular. New Englanders had no particular liking for slavery, but conservative business men did not wish to antagonize their Southern customers. Arrayed against the Abolitionists for a generation were the wealthy and the educated as well as the rank and file of the population—"mobs, Andover Seminary, and rum," as the impatient poet once summed it up. Six years after publishing *Justice and Expediency*, Whittier wrote to Elizabeth Neal:

"For myself, abolition has been to me its own 'exceeding great reward.' It has repaid every sacrifice of time, of money, of reputation, of health, of ease, with the answer of a good conscience, and the happiness which grows out of benevolent exertions for the welfare of others. It has led me to examine myself. It has given me the acquaintance of some of the noblest and best of men and women. *It owes me nothing.*"

When he first committed himself to the Abolition cause, Whittier felt that he must give up poetry. In 1833 he wrote to Jonathan Law:

"My health is vastly improved; the blues have left me; I go to husking frolics, and all that sort of thing. I have put the veto upon poetry, read all I can find, politics, history, rhyme, reason, etc., and am happy,—at least I believe I am. . . . As to your suggestion about poetry, I must decline attending to it. I have knocked Pegasus on the head, as a tanner does his bark-mill donkey, when he is past service."

It was not until later apparently that Whittier discovered how powerful a weapon his verse could be in the antislavery cause. Like Freneau—but unlike certain contemporary poets—he had no illusions about the poetic worth of verse written as propaganda for even a worthy cause. After the Civil War he wrote of his antislavery poems: "They were written with no expectation that they would survive the occasions which called them forth; they were protests,

alarm signals, trumpet-calls to action, words wrung from the writer's heart, forged at white heat, and of course lacking the finish and careful word-selection which reflection and patient brooding might have given." A very few of his antislavery poems—notably "Massachusetts to Virginia"—have the genuine poetic quality

Not all of Whittier's poems, however, were propaganda. He was coming to realize something of the true nature of the poetic art, and beginning to write some of his better short poems. Recognition came very slowly. Bayard Taylor wrote to E. C. Stedman in 1867. "Here is a man who has waited twenty-five years to be generally appreciated. I remember when he was never mentioned without a sneer, except by the small Abolition clique." The establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 with Lowell as editor gave Whittier for the first time a proper medium for the publication of his best work.

In spite of chronically poor health, Whittier proved himself one of the ablest of Abolitionist politicians. He was a shrewd judge of men and an excellent lobbyist. Anticipating the tactics of the Anti-saloon League, he kept the evasive Caleb Cushing—"General C." of *The Biglow Papers*—in a position where he had to help the cause of Abolition in spite of himself; and he was largely responsible for the arrangement that sent Charles Sumner to the Senate as Daniel Webster's successor. Eventually Whittier, like Lowell, found himself not in harmony with the more violent Abolitionists, who were willing to break up the Union in order to rid their section of the stain of slavery. Whittier deplored John Brown's ill-fated attempt to free by violence the slaves in Virginia. In 1861 the Quaker poet, like Hawthorne, was willing to let the seceding states go in peace. He wrote at the time:

*"They break the links of Union: shall we light
The fires of hell to weld anew the chains
Of that red anvil where each blow is pain?"*

After the war Whittier was for the first time free to devote his best energies to poetry. In 1866 he published *Snow-Bound*, other volumes followed in 1869 and 1870. By that time, however, his work was pretty well done. He lived on till 1892, receiving all the honors he could wish after the hardships he had gone through. He took a certain interest in other reforms, but the great passion of his life had been Abolition, and nothing else quite took its place. He was not quick to see the numerous abuses of the industrial system which now prevailed in New England. Howells in vain tried to induce him to make a public protest against the execution of the Chicago "anarchists" in 1887.

Whittier was a fighting Quaker. The witty Gail Hamilton, one of the many women who admired him, once sent him a symbolic pair of slippers on each of which "stood an American eagle, in belligerent attitude, . . . with claws full of thunderbolts"; but she "had toned down the belligerence of the spirited birds by using that most peaceable of colors, the Quaker drab!" In his later years Whittier could on occasion speak humorously of even his own zeal for reform. "The humbug of Reform," he wrote to Gail Hamilton in 1870, "is no better than other humbugs, but I am naturally inclined to think the best I can of all who claim to be trying to set the world aright." Half seriously he described himself in the Prelude to *The Tent on the Beach* (1867):

*"And one there was, a dreamer born,
Who, with a mission to fulfil,*

*Had left the Muses' haunts to turn
 The crank of an opinion-mill,
 Making his rustic reed of song
 A weapon in the war with wrong,
 Yoking his fancy to the breaking-plough,
 That beam-deep turned the soil for truth to spring and grow.*

*"Too quiet seemed the man to ride
 The winged Hippogriff Reform;
 Was his a voice from side to side
 To pierce the tumult of the storm?
 A silent, shy, peace-loving man,
 He seemed no fiery partisan
 To hold his way against the public frown,
 The ban of Church and State, the fierce mob's hounding down."*

Although Whittier was hardly the "philandering celibate" of Albert Mordell's biography, he was attractive to women and to men as different from himself as Dr. Holmes. He had a better sense of humor than most reformers are endowed with, although it is rarely seen in his verse. The following bit of dialogue shows how Whittier laughed his old friend and teacher, Joshua Coffin, out of a fit of religious depression:

"Joshua, don't thee hate God, who has doomed thee to everlasting torment?"

"Why, no, it is for the good of all, that some are punished."

"Joshua, thee has spent thy life doing good, and now thee is of course getting ready to do all the hurt thee can to thy fellow-men."

"No, indeed, my feelings have not changed in the least in this regard."

"Thee is going to hell, then, in this mood?"

"Why, yes, I am reconciled to the will of God, and have no ill feelings toward Him or my race."

"Now, Joshua, thee is going to hell with a heart full of love for everybody—what can the devil find for such an one as thee to do?"

In some respects Whittier was badly handicapped for a poetic career. He was color-blind as to red and green; and after middle life he was partially deaf. His was not a sensuous nature, and moral passion is almost the only one reflected in his verse. He was, however, better aware of his own limitations than were his admirers. To Francis H. Underwood, who was writing a life of him, he wrote:

"I am very grateful for thy generous estimate of my writings in 'Characteristics,' but I fear the critics will not agree with thee. Why not anticipate them, and own up to faults and limitations which everybody sees, and none more clearly than myself? Touch upon my false rhymes and Yankeeisms: confess that I sometimes 'crack the voice of melody and break the legs of time.' . . . Own that I sometimes choose unpoetical themes. Endorse Lowell's 'Fable for Critics' that I mistake occasionally simple excitement for inspiration. In this way we can take the wind out of the sails of ill-natured cavillers. I am not one of the master singers and don't pose as one. By the grace of God I am only what I am, and don't wish to pass for more."

1807-1892-----JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Standard editions are the Cambridge edition (1894) of his poems, and the Riverside (1888), which includes both prose and verse. Many of his uncollected early poems are given in Frances Mary Pray's *A Study of Whittier's Apprenticeship as a Poet* (1930). The standard biography is by S. T. Pickard (2 vols., 1894). There are shorter lives by Francis H. Underwood (1884), T. W. Higginson (1902), G. R. Carpenter (1903), Albert Mordell (1933), and Whitman Bennett (1941). See also John A. Pollard's *John Greenleaf Whittier: Friend of Man* (1949). There is an excellent bibliography by T. F. Currier (1937).

PROEM

(1847)

This poem was written to serve as a poetic preface to the first collected edition of Whittier's *Poems* (1848, dated 1849). It is placed first here to show Whittier's own conception of his place as a poet.

I love the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest
morning dew

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of
the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and
strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
5 I view her common forms with unanointed
eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind,
10 To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to
find.

15 Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my
20 own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
25 As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy
shrine!

MASSACHUSETTS TO VIRGINIA

(December, 1842; January 27, 1843)

These are perhaps the finest of Whittier's antislavery verses, whether one judges them as poetry or as journalistic propaganda. The indignant protest of the fighting Quaker here rises to genuine poetry, particularly in lines 69-84, in which the various counties of Massachusetts speak one after another. The proper names have something of the sonorous ring of Milton's famous passages in *Paradise Lost*.

An alleged fugitive slave, George Latimer, was seized in Boston on a warrant at the request

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE-----1830-1870

of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, Va , who claimed him. The case caused considerable excitement and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand residents of Massachusetts, asking that the state be relieved of "all further participation in the crime of oppression." "George Latimer himself," says Whittier, "was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars" In 1851, after the passage of a more stringent fugitive slave law, Emerson wrote in his journal: "This filthy enactment was made in the nineteenth century, by people who could read and write. I will not obey it, by God."

The blast from Freedom's Northern hills, upon its Southern way,
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachusetts Bay.
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle bugle's peal,
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor clang of horsemen's steel.

5

No trains of deep-mouthed cannon along our highways go;
Around our silent arsenals untrodden lies the snow,
And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon their errands far,
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but none are spread for war.

10

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy words and high
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which melt along our sky;
Yet not one brown, hard hand foregoes its honest labor here,
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends his axe in fear.

15

Wild are the waves which lash the reefs along St George's bank,
Cold on the shores of Labrador the fog lies white and dank,
Through storm, and wave, and blinding mist, stout are the hearts which man
The fishing-smacks of Marblehead, the sea-boats of Cape Ann.

20

The cold north light and wintry sun glare on their icy forms,
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or wrestling with the storms;
Free as the winds they drive before, rough as the waves they roam,
They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat against their rocky home.

25

What means the Old Dominion? Hath she forgot the day
When o'er her conquered valleys swept the Briton's steel array?
How, side by side with sons of hers, the Massachusetts men
Encountered Tarleton's charge of fire, and stout Cornwallis, then?

30

Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer to the call
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out from Faneuil Hall?
When, echoing back her Henry's cry, came pulsing on each breath
Of Northern winds the thrilling sounds of "Liberty or Death!"

35

What asks the Old Dominion? If now her sons have proved
False to their father's memory, false to the faith they loved;
If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great charter spurn,
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and duty turn?

40

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful hell;
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the bloodhound's yell;

We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves,
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massachusetts bow;
5 The spirit of her early time is with her even now;
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves slow and calm and cool,
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sister's slave and tool!

All that a sister State should do, all that a free State may,
10 Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our early day;
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must stagger with alone,
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

Hold, while ye may, your struggling slaves, and burden God's free air
15 With woman's shriek beneath the lash, and manhood's wild despair;
Cling closer to the "cleaving curse" that writes upon your plains
The blasting of Almighty wrath against a land of chains

Still shame your gallant ancestry, the cavaliers of old,
20 By watching round the shambles where human flesh is sold;
Gloat o'er the new-born child, and count his market value, when
The maddened mother's cry of woe shall pierce the slaver's den!

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the Virginia name;
25 Plant, if ye will, your fathers' graves with rankest weeds of shame;
Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair universe;
We wash our hands forever of your sin and shame and curse

A voice from lips whereon the coal from Freedom's shrine hath been,
30 Thrilled, as but yesterday, the hearts of Berkshire's mountain men:
The echoes of that solemn voice are sadly lingering still
In all our sunny valleys, on every windswept hill.

And when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey
35 Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray,
How, through the free lips of the son, the father's warning spoke;
How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the Pilgrim city broke!

A hundred thousand right arms were lifted up on high,
40 A hundred thousand voices sent back their loud reply;
Through the thronged towns of Essex the startling summons rang,
And up from bench and loom and wheel her young mechanics sprang!

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of thousands as of one,
45 The shaft of Bunker calling to that of Lexington;
From Norfolk's ancient villages, from Plymouth's rocky bound
To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean close her round;

From rich and rural Worcester, where through the calm repose
50 Of cultured vales and fringing woods the gentle Nashua flows,
To where Wachuset's wintry blasts the mountain larches stir,
Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of "God save Latimer!"

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with the salt sea spray,
And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narragansett Bay!
Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,
And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke Hill.

5

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free sons and daughters,
Deep calling unto deep aloud, the sound of many waters!
Against the burden of that voice what tyrant power shall stand?
No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon her land!

10

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness we have borne,
In answer to our faith and trust, your insult and your scorn;
You've spurned our kindest counsels, you've hunted for our lives;
And shaken round our hearths and homes your manacles and gyves!

15

We wage no war, we lift no arm, we fling no torch within
The fire-damps of the quaking mine beneath your soil of sin,
We leave ye with your bondmen, to wrestle, while ye can.
With the strong upward tendencies and godlike soul of man!

20

But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given
For freedom and humanity is registered in heaven,
No slave-hunt in our borders,—no pirate on our strand!
No fetters in the Bay State,—no slave upon our land!

ICHABOD

(1850; 1850)

This poem, which is worthy of comparison with Browning's "The Lost Leader," expresses the disappointment of Whittier—and many other New Englanders—on reading the Seventh of March Speech in which Daniel Webster, the idol of Massachusetts, supported the Compromise of 1850 and the stringent Fugitive Slave Law, which was a part of it. The poem, in fact, does considerable injustice to Webster, who knew that his stand would cost him many supporters. Thinking that compromise and concession were preferable to war, he supported Clay's measures. Years later Whittier wrote another poem, "The Lost Occasion," in which, as he himself says, "I gave utterance to an almost universal regret that the great statesman did not live to see the flag which he loved trampled under the feet of Slavery, and, in view of this desecration, make his last days glorious in defence of 'Liberty and Union, one and inseparable.'" The radical never has much patience with the workings of the practical politician, even when he is a progressive; and the Abolitionists often found fault with Lincoln as well as Webster. After Webster's death Emerson wrote:

*"Why did all manly gifts in Webster fail?
He wrote on Nature's grandest brow, For Sale"*

The title of the poem is derived from I Samuel, iv, 21: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, 'The glory is departed from Israel . . .'"

5

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

10

Reville him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

15

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

20

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,

Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains,
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains

All else is gone, from those great eyes
The soul has fled.
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame,
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

MAUD MULLER (1854)

See Bret Harte's clever parody of this poem given elsewhere in this volume.

Maud Muller on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast,—

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
5 Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

10 And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

15 And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

20 "Thanks!" said the Judge, "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed "

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

25 Then talked of the haying, and wondered
whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
30 And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

35 At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah me!
40 That I the Judge's bride might be!

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

45 "My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

"I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

50 "And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door."

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The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill, And saw Maud Muller standing still.	She wedded a man unlearned and poor, And many children played round her door.
"A form more fair, a face more sweet, Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.	But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain, 5 Left their traces on heart and brain.
"And her modest answer and graceful air Show her wise and good as she is fair.	And oft, when the summer sun shone hot On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,
"Would she were mine, and I to-day, Like her, a harvester of hay;	10 And she heard the little spring brook fall Over the roadside, through the wall,
"No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs, Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,	In the shade of the apple-tree again She saw a rider draw his rein; 15
"But low of cattle and song of birds, And health and quiet and loving words."	And, gazing down with timid grace, She felt his pleased eyes read her face.
But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold, And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.	Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls 20 Stretched away into stately halls;
So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on, And Maud was left in the field alone.	The weary wheel to a spinnet turned, The tallow candle an astral burned,
But the lawyers smiled that afternoon, When he hummed in court an old love-tune;	25 And for him who sat by the chimney lug, ¹ Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,
And the young girl mused beside the well Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.	A manly form at her side she saw, And joy was duty and love was law. 30
He wedded a wife of richest dower, Who lived for fashion, as he for power.	Then she took up her burden of life again, Saying only, "It might have been."
Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow, He watched a picture come and go;	Alas for maiden, alas for Judge, 35 For rich repiner and household drudge!
And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes Looked out in their innocent surprise.	God pity them both! and pity us all, Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.
Oft, when the wine in his glass was red, He longed for the wayside well instead;	40 For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: "It might have been!"
And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.	Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies Deeply buried from human eyes; 45
And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain, "Ah, that I were free again!	And, in the hereafter, angels may Roll the stone from its grave away!
"Free as when I rode that day, Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."	50

¹ "The term 'chimney lug' which occurs in this poem," Whittier explains, "refers to the old custom in New England of hanging a pole with hooks attached to it down the chimney, to hang pots and kettles on. It is called a 'lug-pole.'"

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

(1828; 1857; 1857)

The founding of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 gave Whittier for the first time a proper medium for publishing his better poems. Soon after the first number, containing Whittier's "The Gift of Tritemius," appeared, Whittier wrote Lowell:

"The first number is excellent. I send for December (I hope in season) a bit of a Yankee ballad, the spirit of which pleases me more than the execution. Will it do? . . . The incident occurred sometime in the last century. [It actually took place in 1808.] The refrain is the actual song of the women on this march. To relish it, one must understand the peculiar tone and dialect of the ancient Marbleheaders."

Lowell, who in 1860 referred to the poem as "by long odds the best of modern ballads," suggested putting the refrain in dialect.

To Samuel Roads, Jr., the historian of Marblehead, who had tried to show that Ireson was not responsible for the abandonment of the disabled ship, Whittier wrote:

"My verse was founded solely on a fragment of rhyme which I heard from one of my early schoolmates, a native of Marblehead. . . ."

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase

Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns'
5 twang,

Over and over the Mænads sang:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

10 Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
15 "Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
20 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
25 Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
30 Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

35 Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
40 Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
45 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
50 Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,

Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! why should we!"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

TELLING THE BEES (1858)

"In 'Telling the Bees,' " wrote Lowell, "Mr. Whittier has enshrined a country superstition in a poem of exquisite grace and feeling." And, he might have added, Whittier has not sentimentalized the story. Early nineteenth-century American authors who complained of the dearth of native folk-lore often did not know where to look for it outside of books. The country-bred Whittier naturally knew the superstitions of rural New England, as Longfellow, for example, did not. He explains the particular bit of folk-lore used in the poem (found also in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*) as follows:

"On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed

to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home."

In the poem Whittier has described the surroundings of his birthplace. See also his prose sketch, "The Fish I Didn't Catch."

5 Here is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
10 And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-
yard,
15 And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
20 Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'-errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
25 And the same rose blows, and the same sun
glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the
breeze;
30 And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and
throat.

40 Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and well-sweep near.

45 I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

50 Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,

1819-1891-----JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

5 But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

10 And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day;

15

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819 - 1891

Lowell's family was—and still is—among the most distinguished in New England. His ancestors were college graduates prominent in the law and the ministry. The city of Lowell, Mass., was named for one uncle, and the Lowell Institute in Boston was founded by another. Lowell entered Harvard College in 1834, where he studied under George Ticknor and Longfellow. He was to become in 1855 the last occupant of the Smith Professorship of Modern Languages held by these two distinguished teachers. In college Lowell read a great deal, chiefly outside of his class work. The future editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* edited a college magazine, *Harvardiana*. In his senior year he was suspended "on account of continued neglect of his college duties." While in rustication at Concord, he saw something of Emerson, who did not then attract him. In his class poem—which he was not permitted to read at commencement—the future reformer showed his conservative sympathies by ridiculing both Transcendentalists and Abolitionists.

After his graduation in 1838, he studied law, like Holmes, because there seemed nothing else to do. After graduating from the Harvard Law School in 1840, he opened a law office in Boston; but, having no clients, he spent his time in reading and writing. In 1842 he founded an ill-fated magazine, *The Pioneer*, which—though among its contributors it numbered Poe, Hawthorne, Whittier, and Lowell himself—expired after three numbers, leaving Lowell in debt. In 1844 came his first important venture in literary criticism, *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*, but until after the Civil War his more important work was to be done in verse.

In December, 1844, Lowell married Miss Maria White, a poet and a reformer. His active

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interest in reform during the next decade was partly inspired by her. For a time he edited the *Pennsylvania Freeman* in Philadelphia at a salary of ten dollars a month; and he was long a contributor to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. In 1850, however, he was writing to C. F. Briggs: "I find that Reform cannot take up the whole of me." He was writing and publishing too rapidly. Late in 1847 appeared his *Poems, Second Series* (dated 1848), and in the following year came *The Vision of Sir Launfal, A Fable for Critics*, and the first series of *The Biglow Papers*. Mrs. Lowell died in 1853. In 1857 he married Miss Frances Dunlap. In 1854 he gave at the Lowell Institute a series of lectures on the nineteenth-century poets and, partly as a result, was appointed the next year to succeed Longfellow as Smith Professor of Modern Languages, with the privilege of spending a year in Europe for fuller preparation. He taught at Harvard most of the time until 1877. He was later of the opinion that he would have accomplished more if he had never been a teacher. He wrote to Charles Eliot Norton on February 2, 1874:

". . . I never was good for much as a professor—once a week, perhaps, at the best, when I could manage to get into some conceit of myself, and so could put a little of my *go* into the boys. The rest of the time my desk was as good as I. And then, on the other hand, my being a professor wasn't good for me—it damped my gunpowder, as it were, and my mind, when it took fire at all (which wasn't often), drawled off in an unwilling fuse instead of leaping to meet the first spark."

In an admirable essay, "Mr. Lowell as a Teacher" (in *Stelligeri*), the late Professor Barrett Wendell described Lowell's methods of instruction, which were as unconventional as those of Longfellow: "We gave up note-books in a week. Our business was not to cram lifeless detail, but to absorb as much as we might of the spirit of his exuberant literary vitality." Best remembered by Lowell's students were the evenings spent in his library before a wood-fire while Lowell smoked his pipe and talked "in his own quizzical way—at one moment beautifully in earnest, at the next so whimsical that you could not quite make out what he meant—about whatever came into his head." "He believed," wrote the late C. W. Eliot, "that language should always be taught primarily as the vehicle of beautiful literature, whereas most language teachers of that day were using admirable literature as [a] means of teaching grammar and philology." (The graduate student should by all means read the address which Lowell delivered while President of the Modern Language Association. See *PMLA*, V, 5-22 (1890). The address was reprinted in *Latest Literary Essays* under the title, "The Study of Modern Languages.")

In 1857, chiefly through the persistence of Francis H. Underwood, the *Atlantic Monthly* came into existence and the New England group for the first time had an adequate organ. As its first editor (1857-1861), Lowell set a high standard for his successors. He, along with Poe and Richard Watson Gilder, is one of our great magazine editors. The position gave Lowell great influence, and he sometimes used it to alter the manuscripts of important contributors as an editor of the present day would perhaps not dare to do. For example, Lowell, while editing the *North American Review*, wrote to E. C. Stedman:

"I shall take the liberty to make a verbal change here and there, such as I am sure you would agree to could we talk the matter over. I think, for example, you speak rather too well of young Lytton, whom I regard both as an imposter and as an antinomian heretic. Swinburne I must modify a little, as you will see, to make the [*North American*] *Review* consistent with itself. But you need not be afraid of not knowing your own child."

Lowell was joint editor with Charles Eliot Norton of the *North American Review* in the years 1864-1872. The following passage in a letter from Lowell to John Lothrop Motley, July 28, 1864, shows the keen insight of the expert magazinist:

"You may have heard that Norton and I have undertaken to edit the *North American*—rather Sisyphean job, you will say. It wanted three chief elements to be successful. It wasn't thoroughly, that is, thick and thinly, loyal, it wasn't lively, and it had no particular opinions on any particular subject.

"It was an eminently safe periodical, and accordingly was in great danger of running aground. It was an easy matter, of course, to make it loyal—even to give it opinions (such as they were), but to make it alive is more difficult. Perhaps the day of the quarterlies is gone by, and those megatheria of letters may be in the mere course of nature withdrawing to their last swamps to die in peace. Anyhow, here we are with our megatherium on our hands, and we must strive to find what will fill his huge belly, and keep him alive a little longer."

The Civil War stirred Lowell as it did few others of his group. The deaths of three much loved nephews affected him deeply. He published a second series of *The Biglow Papers* in the *Atlantic Monthly*. For the *North American Review* he wrote several political articles—including one on Lincoln that pleased the President. "I *did* divine him earlier than most men of the Brahmin caste," he wrote in 1886. Perhaps the best expression of his patriotic feeling is found in his "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration" in 1865, which also contains a notable tribute to Lincoln. After the war he came to the conclusion that the Congressional policy of Reconstruction was wrong. "He had," says Howells, "a great tenderness for the broken and ruined South . . ."

Lowell was the youngest of the great New Englanders, but even he found it difficult to adjust himself to the many changes brought about by the Civil War. He turned more and more to prose, and he became interested in various political and social problems. On May 2, 1879, he wrote to William Dean Howells:

". . . I feel every day more sensibly that I belong to a former age. A new generation has grown up that knows not Joseph, and I have nothing left to do but to rake together what embers are left of my fire and get what warmth out of them I may."

He was Minister to Spain (1877-1880) and later to England (1880-1885). In England he was extremely popular. He was on the whole the most distinguished representative the United States has sent to the Court of St. James's. In 1882 Moses Coit Tyler, the first scholarly historian of American literature, wrote in his journal an account of his meeting with Lowell:

"*London, 23 June.* . . . At about two, I called at the legation in Victoria street. After some delay I was ushered into Lowell's room. My first impression was of the gracefulness and graciousness of the man; his elegance in dress and form; his manly beauty. As he told me, he is sixty-three years old; his dark auburn hair still abundant and rich, just touched with silver and parted in the middle. His whiskers are more whitened. His eyes bright; his whole face mobile, aristocratic, refined. The perfect courtier and man of the world, dashed by scholarship, wit, genius, consciousness of reputation, and success. His voice was very pleasant and sweet; his tones indescribably pleasant, a pronunciation not copied from the English, and as pure and melodious as theirs at the best. His fluency in words

perfect, his diction neat, pointed, with merry implications and fine turns. He is an immense success in England, in society and public meetings; petted and flattered like a prince; admired by men and worshipped by women. He has the pick and run of the best society in the kingdom. His manners have the ease, poise, facility, and polish of one who has got used to courts and palaces. I must say I never saw a more perfect gentleman. Indeed, he is too perfect; it would have pleased me better to have found the poet, satirist, and man of letters less worldly, more simple in style. I revere the sturdy dignity and homely simplicity of men like Emerson and Whittier."

Tyler was disturbed when Lowell remarked: "My dear Mr. Tyler, in America it is men like you who have not the least influence. The country is ruled by low demagogues." As a matter of fact, Lowell was not far wrong. His doubts concerning the post-war political and social development of America he expressed with courage in several addresses, notably "The Place of the Independent in Politics."

In 1885 Lowell returned to "Elmwood" and his books. He died there on August 12, 1891. If he had not fulfilled the promise of his earlier years, he had at least lived up to his own motto:

*"The Epic of a man rehearse,
Be something better than thy verse."*

In *A Fable for Critics*, first published anonymously in 1848, Lowell described himself:

"There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb
With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme,
He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,
But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders,
The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching
Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;
His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,
And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,
At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem."

The best edition of Lowell's poems is the Cambridge Edition (1897). There are two fairly inclusive editions of his prose works: the Riverside (1891-1892) and the Elmwood (1904). See also Albert Mordell (ed.), *The Function of the Poet and Other Essays* (1920). The standard life in two volumes is by H. E. Scudder (1905). There are shorter biographies by Ferris Greenslet (1905) and Richmond Croom Beatty (1942). Lowell's letters, which are excellent reading, were edited by Charles Eliot Norton. See also M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *New Letters of James Russell Lowell* (1932). In his *James Russell Lowell as a Critic* (1915), J. J. Reilly views him as an impressionist. Norman Foerster in *American Criticism* (1928) takes a radically different view. There is a bibliography by G. W. Cooke (1906). *James Russell Lowell: Representative Selections* (1947), edited by H. H. Clark and Norman Foerster, has an excellent introduction and a good working bibliography. See also Robert C. Le Clair, *Three American Travellers in England* (1945).

from THE BIGLOW PAPERS, FIRST
SERIES* (1848) .

These poems, first published in the *Boston Courier* and the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, were occasioned by the War with Mexico. On September 13, 1859, Lowell wrote to Thomas Hughes (the English author of *Tom Brown's School Days*), who was planning to bring out an edition in England.

"I only know that I believed our war with Mexico (though we had as just ground for it as a strong nation ever has against a weak one) to be essentially a war of false pretences, and that it would result in widening the boundaries and so prolonging the life of slavery. . . . I was born and bred in the country, and the dialect was homely to me. I tried my first 'Biglow Paper' in a newspaper, and found it had a great run. So I wrote the others from time to time during the year that followed, always very rapidly, sometimes (as with 'What Mr. Robinson Thinks') at one sitting.

"When I came to collect them and publish them in a volume, I conceived my parson-editor with his pedantry and verbosity, his amiable vanity and superiority to the verses he was editing, . . ."

The Biglow Papers is the only piece of dialect writing before the Civil War that is generally remembered, but the Yankee dialect had been already widely used on the stage and in the newspapers. (For the literary use of American dialects, which do not differ greatly, see G. P. Krapp, *The English Language in America*, 1925). "I know *Yankee*, if I know nothing else," wrote Lowell. The book had some influence upon Edward Eggleston and perhaps other local colorists after the Civil War.

Mrs. James T. Fields quotes Emerson as saying "I told Lowell once that his humorous poems gave me great pleasure; they were worth all his serious poetry. He did not take it very well, but muttered, 'The Washers of the Shroud,' and walked away." V. L. Parrington's estimate of *The Biglow Papers* is suggestive:

"The native clutter of Lowell's mind is there laid bare—the grotesque mixture of homely satire, moral aphorisms, Yankee linguistics, literary criticism—an unwieldy mass that he could neither simplify nor reduce to order. The machinery spoils the propaganda and weighs down the satire; yet the verse has survived because for once Lowell let himself go and hit such heads as he had a mind to."

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NO. I. A LETTER

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM TO THE
HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM, EDITOR OF THE
BOSTON COURIER, INCLOSING A POEM OF HIS
SON, MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

(1846)

JAYLEM, *June 1846.*

MR. EDDYTER,—Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as popler as a hen with 1 chickin, with 2 fellers a drummin and fifin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt he thout Hosea hedn't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo's though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosy woodn't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20 Rooster's tales stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his shoulders and figured onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater hed sot in his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I heern Him a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in flit-time. The old Woman ses she to me ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee's gut the chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't you Bee skeered, ses I, he's oney amakin pottery ses i, he's ollers on hand at that ere busyness like Da & martin,¹ and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosy he cum down stares full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go reed his varses to Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney grate shows o' book larnin himself, bimeby he cum back and sed the parson wuz dreffle tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hisn now, cos the parson kind o' slicked off sum o' the last varses, but he told Hosee he didn't want to put his ore in to tetch to the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As thay wuz, and then Hosy ses he sed suthin a nuther about Simplex Mundishes² or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind o' didn't hear him, for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and I've lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no wheres a kitting spryer'n I be.

¹ Day and Martin were makers of shoe polish.

² *Simplex munditiis*, simply adorned.

If you print 'em I wish you'd jest let folks
know who hosity's father is, cos my ant Keziah
used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she
ain't livin' though and he's a likely kind o'
lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW

Thrash away, you'll hev to rattle
On them kittle-drums o' yourn,—
'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn;
Put in stiff, you fifer feller,
Let folks see how spry you be,—
Guess you'll toot till you are yellin'
'Fore you git ahoid o' me!

Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,
Hope it ain't your Sunday's best;—
Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton
To stuff out a soger's chest:
Sence we farmers hev to pay fer't,
Ef you must wear humps like these,
S'posin' you should try salt hay fer't,
It would du ez slick ez grease.

'Twouldn't suit them Southun fellers,
They're a drefle graspin' set,
We must ollers blow the bellers
Wen they want their irons het;
May be it's all right ez preachin',
But my narves it kind o' grates,
Wen I see the overreachin'
O' them nigger-drivin' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,
Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth
(Helped by Yankee renegaders),
Thru the vartu o' the North!
We begin to think it's nater
To take sarse an' not be riled;—
Who'd expect to see a tater
All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder,—
There you hev it plain an' flat;
I don't want to go no furdur
Than my Testymeny fer that;
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've gut to git up airly
Ef you want to take in God.

'Taint your eppyletts an' feathers
Make the thing a grain more right;

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'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers
Will excuse ye in His sight:
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
5 Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you.

Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
10 Ef it's right to go amowin'
Feller-men like oats an' rye?
I dunno but wut it's pooty
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—
But it's curus Christian dooty
15 This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy
Tell they're pupple in the face,—
It's a grand gret cemetary
20 Fer the barthrights of our race; ;
They jest want this Californy
So's to lug new slave-States in
To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,
An' to plunder ye like sin.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee
Take sech everlastin' pains,
All to get the Devil's thankee
Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?
30 Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers,
Clear ez one an' one make two,
Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers
Want to make wite slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to
Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,
An' it makes a handy sum, tu,
Any gump could larn by heart;
Laborin' man an' laborin' woman
40 Hev one glory an' one shame.
Ev'y thin' thet's done inhuman
Injers all on 'em the same.

'Taint by turnin' out to hack folks
45 You're agoin' to git your right,
Nor by lookin' down on black folks
Coz you're put upon by wite;
Slavery aint o' nary color,
'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,
50 All it keers fer in a feller
'S jest to make him fill its pus.

Want to tackle *me* in, du ye?
I expect you'll hev to wait;

Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye
 You'll begin to kal'late;
 S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'
 All the carkiss from your bones,
 Coz you helped to give a lickin'
 To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy
 Wether I'd be sech a goose
 Ez to jine ye,—guess you'd fancy
 The etarnal bung wuz loose!
 She wants me fer home consumption,
 Let alone the hay's to mow,—
 Ef you're arter folks o' gumption,
 You've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors that's crowin'
 Like a cockerel three months old,—
 Don't ketch any on 'em goin',
 Though they *be* so blasted bold;
Aint they a prime lot o' fellers?
 'Fore they think on't guess they'll sprout
 (Like a peach thet's got the yellers),
 With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'
 Bigger pens to cram with slaves,
 Help the men thet's ollers dealin'
 Insults on your father's graves;
 Help the strong to grind the feeble,
 Help the many agin the few,
 Help the men thet call your people
 Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew!

Massachusetts, God forgive her,
 She's akneelin' with the rest,
 She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever
 In her grand old eagle-nest;
 She thet ough' to stand so fearless
 W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,
 Holdin' up a beacon peerless
 To the oppressed of all the world!

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen
 Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz?
 Wut'll make ye act like freemen?
 Wut'll git your dander riz?
 Come, I'll tell ye wut I'm thinkin'
 Is our dooty in this fix,
 They'd ha' done't ez quick ez winkin'
 In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple,
 Call all true men to disown

The tradoozers of our people,
 The enslavers o' their own;
 Let our dear old Bay State proudly
 Put the trumpet to her mouth,
 5 Let her ring this messidge loudly
 In the ears of all the South:—

"I'll return ye good fer evil
 Much ez we frail mortils can,
 10 But I wun't go help the Devil
 Makin' man the cus o' man;
 Call me coward, call me traiter,
 Jest ez suits your mean idees,—
 Here I stand a tyrant-hater
 15 An' the friend o' God an' Peace!"

Ef I'd *my* way I hed ruther
 We should go to work an' part,
 They take one way, we take t'other,
 20 Guess it wouldn't break my heart;
 Man hed ough' to put asunder
 Them thet God has noways jined;
 An' I shouldn't gretly wonder
 Ef there's thousands o' my mind.³
 25

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as *going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it*. Bishop Latimer will have him to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis Pescara to the Papal Legate, that *it was impossible for men to serve Mars and Christ at the same time*. Yet in time past the profession of arms was judged to be *κατ' ἐξοχήν*⁴ that of a gentleman, nor does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or shall we hold with that

³ Some Abolitionists advocated breaking up the Union; Lowell apparently did not mean literally what he says in the closing stanza. In a letter to Charles F. Briggs, March 26, 1848, he says: "I do not agree with the abolitionists in their disunion and non-voting theories."

⁴ Preeminently.

nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz, who was Count Königsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne, that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to the necessities of the upper classes, and that "God would consider a *gentleman* and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in"? It may be said of us all, *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*.⁵ —H. W.]

NO. III. WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

(1847)

George Nixon Briggs, the Whig Governor of Massachusetts, was renominated in 1847. His unsuccessful opponent on the Democratic ticket was Caleb Cushing, who was at that time with the American army in Mexico. John Paul Robinson, a member of the state legislature and a Whig, had made public an open letter announcing his intention of voting for Cushing.

Guvener B. is a sensible man;
He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;
He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,
An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?
We can't never choose him o' course,—thet's flat;
Guess we shall hev to come round (don't you?)
An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;
Fer John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

General C. is a dresfle smart man:
He's ben on all sides thet give places or pelf;
But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—
He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself;—

So John P.
Robinson he

⁵ We live (are influenced) rather by example than by reason.

Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.
General C. he goes in fer the war;
He don't vally princerple more'n an old cud;
Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,
5 But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?
So John P.
Robinson he
Sez he shall vote fer General C.

10 We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut aint,
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
15 An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P.
Robinson he

20 Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.
The side of our country must ollers be took,
An' President Polk, you know, *he* is our country.

25 An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book
Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contry*;
An' John P.
Robinson he
30 Sez this is his view o' the things to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw, fum*;
35 An' thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half rum;
But John P.
Robinson he
Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so
40 must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-tail coats,
45 An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,
To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson he
50 Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters,
I vow,—

God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fel-
lers,

To start the world's team wen it gits in a
slough;

For John P.

Robinson he

Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out
Gee!

[The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment,—“Our country, right or wrong.” It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land, much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor diminish by a tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our own Bay State too well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. *Patriæ fumus igne alieno luculentior* is best qualified with this,—*Ubi libertas, ibi patria*.⁶ We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude, “*Our country, however bounded!*” he demands of us that we sacrifice the larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil

⁶ “The smoke of one’s fatherland is made brighter by the fire of another” is best qualified with this—“Where liberty is, there is my country.”

our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair’s-breadth, she ceases to be our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*.⁷ That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarus and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her. . . . H. W.]

from THE BIGLOW PAPERS,
SECOND SERIES (1866)

THE COURTIN’

(1848, ?, 1866)

“The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident) was in ‘The Courtin’.’ While the introduction to the First Series was going through the press, I received word from the printer that there was a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and improvised another fictitious ‘notice of the press,’ in which, because verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the *balance* of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other verses, into some of which I infused a little more sentiment in a homely way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters and making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall put it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those kindly importunings” (Lowell, in the “Introduction” to *The Biglow Papers*, 1866). See Arthur W. M. Voss, “The Evolution of Lowell’s ‘The Courtin’;’” *American Literature*, XV, 42-50 (March, 1943).

God makes sech nights, all white an’ still

Fur’z you can look or listen,

Moonshine an’ snow on field an’ hill,

All silence an’ all glisten.

⁷ As a stepmother.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
 An' peeked in thru' the winder,
 An' there sot Huldy all alone,
 'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
 With half a cord o' wood in—
 There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)
 To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
 Towards the pootiest, bless her,
 An' leetle flames danced all about
 The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
 An' in amongst 'em rusted
 The ole queen's-arm thet grant'her Young
 Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
 Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',
 An' she looked full ez rosy agin
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look
 On sech a blessed cretur,
 A dogrose blushin' to a brook
 Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
 Clear grit an' human natur';
 None couldn't quicker pitch a ton
 Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
 Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
 Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—
 All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long 'o her his veins 'ould run
 All crinkly like curled maple,
 The side she breshed felt full o' sun
 Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
 Ez hisn in the choir;
 My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
 She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
 When her new meetin'-bunnet

Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
 O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*
 5 She seemed to've gut a new soul,
 For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,
 Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
 10 A-raspin' on the scraper,—
 All ways to once her feelins flew
 Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
 15 Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
 But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
 20 Ez though she wished him furder,
 An' on her apples kep' to work,
 Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"
 25 "Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin'"—
 "To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
 Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

To say why gals act so or so,
 30 Or don't, 'ould be presumin';
 Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
 Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
 35 Then stood a spell on t'other,
 An' on which one he felt the wust
 He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin";
 40 Says she, "Think likely, Mister":
 Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
 An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,
 45 Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
 All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
 An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind
 50 Whose naturs never vary,
 Like streams that keep a summer mind
 Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin',
Tell mother see how metters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red came back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
An' all I know is they was cried
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY (1857)

On August 28, 1865, Lowell wrote to Charles Eliot Norton: "I shall never be a poet till I get out of the pulpit, and New England was all meeting-house when I was growing up." As a literary critic, Lowell knew the perils of didacticism in poetry, but he was never able entirely to free himself from them. The poem was published in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

When wise Minerva still was young
And just the least romantic,
Soon after from Jove's head she flung
That preternatural antic,
'T is said, to keep from idleness
Or flirting, those twin curses,
She spent her leisure, more or less,
In writing po—, no, verses.

How nice they were! to rhyme with *far*
A kind *star* did not tarry;
The metre, too, was regular
As schoolboy's dot and carry;
And full they were of pious plums,
So extra-super-moral,—
For sucking Virtue's tender gums
Most tooth-enticing coral.

A clean, fair copy she prepares,
Makes sure of moods and tenses,
With her own hand,—for prudence spares
A man-(or woman-)-uensis;
Complete, and tied with ribbons proud,
She hinted soon how cosy a
Treat it would be to read them loud
After next day's Ambrosia.

The Gods thought not it would amuse
So much as Homer's Odyssees,

But could not very well refuse
The properest of Goddesses;
So all sat round in attitudes
Of various dejection,

5 As with a *hem!* the queen of prudes
Began her grave prelection.

At the first pause Zeus said, "Well sung!—
I mean—ask Phœbus,—*he* knows."

10 Says Phœbus, "Zounds! a wolf's among
Admetus's merinos!

Fine! very fine! but I must go;

They stand in need of me there;

Excuse me!" snatched his stick, and so

15 Plunged down the gladdened ether.

With the next gap, Mars said, "For me
Don't wait,—naught could be finer,

But I'm engaged at half past three,—

20 A fight in Asia Minor!"

Then Venus lisped, "I'm sorely tried,

These duty-calls are vip'rous;

But I *must* go; I have a bride

To see about in Cyprus."

25

Then Bacchus,—*"I must say good-by,*

Although my peace it jeopards;

I meet a man at four, to try

A well-broke pair of leopards."

30 His words woke Hermes. "Ah!" he said,

"I *so* love moral theses!"

Then winked at Hebe, who turned red,

And smoothed her apron's creases.

35

Just then Zeus snored,—the Eagle drew

His head the wing from under;

Zeus snored,—o'er startled Greece there flew

The many-volumed thunder.

Some augurs counted nine, some, ten;

40 Some said 't was war, some, famine,

And all, that other-minded men

Would get a precious —.

Proud Pallas sighed, "It will not do;

45 Against the Muse I've sinned, oh!"

And her torn rhymes sent flying through

Olympus's back window.

Then, packing up a peplus clean,

She took the shortest path thence,

50 And opened, with a mind serene,

A Sunday-school in Athens.

The verses? Some in ocean swilled,
 Killed every fish that bit to 'em;
 Some Galen caught, and, when distilled,
 Found morphine the residuum;
 But some that rotted on the earth
 Sprang up again in copies,
 And gave two strong narcotics birth,
 Didactic verse and poppies.

Years after, when a poet asked
 The Goddess's opinion,
 As one whose soul its wings had tasked
 In Art's clear-aired dominion,
 "Discriminate," she said, "betimes;
 The Muse is unforgiving;
 Put all your beauty in your rhymes,
 Your morals in your living."

"FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO
 SIC COGITAVIT"¹
 (1888)

That's a rather bold speech, my Lord Bacon,
 For, indeed, is 't so easy to know
 Just how much we from others have taken,
 And how much our own natural flow?

Since your mind bubbled up at its fountain,
 How many streams made it elate,
 While it calmed to the plain from the mountain,
 As every mind must that grows great?

While you thought 'twas You thinking as newly
 As Adam still wet with God's dew,
 You forgot in your self-pride that truly
 The whole Past was thinking through you.

Greece, Rome, nay, your namesake, old Roger,
 With Truth's nameless delvers who wrought
 In the dark mines of Truth, helped to prod your
 Fine brain with the goad of their thought.

As mummy was prized for a rich hue
 The painter no elsewhere could find,
 So 'twas buried men's thinking with which you
 Gave the ripe mellow tone to your mind.

I heard the proud strawberry saying,
 "Only look what a ruby I've made!"
 It forgot how the bees in their maying
 Had brought it the stuff for its trade.

¹ "Francis of Verulam thought thus." Francis Bacon was Baron Verulam.

And yet there's the half of a truth in it,
 And my Lord might his copyright sue;
 For a thought's his who kindles new youth in it,
 Or so puts it as makes it more true.

The birds but repeat without ending
 The same old traditional notes,
 Which some, by more happily blending,
 Seem to make over new in their throats;

And we men through our old bit of song run,
 Until one just improves on the rest,
 And we call a thing his, in the long run,
 Who utters it clearest and best.

AUSPEX
 (1888)

My heart, I cannot still it,
 Nest that had song-birds in it;
 And when the last shall go,
 The dreary days, to fill it,
 Instead of lark or linnet,
 Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,
 Without the passion stronger
 That skyward longs and sings,—
 Woe's me, I shall be lonely
 When I can feel no longer
 The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,
 Like birds the brown leaves hover,
 But it will not be long
 Before the wild confusion
 Fall wavering down to cover
 The poet and his song.

MONNA LISA
 (1888)

She gave me all that woman can,
 Nor her soul's nunnery forego,
 A confidence that man to man
 Without remorse can never show.
 Rare art, that can the sense refine
 Till not a pulse rebellious stirs,
 And, since she never can be mine,
 Makes it seem sweeter to be hers!

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

1804 - 1864

Hawthorne's literary talent is of the first order. His subjects are generally not to me subjects of the highest interest; but his literary talent is of the first order, the finest, I think, which America has yet produced,—finer, by much, than Emerson's.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, "Emerson" (1883).

Nathaniel Hawthorne, grandson of "Bold Hathorne" of the Revolutionary ballad, was born on the fourth of July, 1804, in Salem, Mass. "Salem," wrote William Tudor while Hawthorne was in his teens, ". . . is remarkable for the retired, secluded habits of its population." Hawthorne cannot be thoroughly understood without some knowledge of this decadent seaport town in which he grew up. In "The Custom-house," an essay prefixed to *The Scarlet Letter*, he complains that "there [in Salem] has never been, for me, the genial atmosphere which a literary man requires in order to ripen the best harvest of his mind." In another passage in the same essay he indicates his relation to his background:

"It is now [in 1850] nearly two centuries and a quarter since the original Briton [William Hathorne], the earliest emigrant of my name, made his appearance in the wild and forest-bordered settlement which has since become a city. And here his descendants have been born and died, and have mingled their earthly substance with the soil, until no small portion of it must necessarily be akin to the mortal frame wherewith, for a little while, I walk the streets. In part, therefore, the attachment which I speak of is the mere sensuous sympathy of dust for dust. Few of my countrymen can know what it is; nor, as frequent transplantation is perhaps better for the stock, need they consider it desirable to know."

Of "this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned progenitor," Hawthorne writes, "He was a soldier, legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the Church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both evil and good." William's son John "made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him." There was a family tradition, which figures in *The House of the Seven Gables*, that one of the victims cursed John Hathorne and his descendants, saying, "God will give him blood to drink." Continuing his sketch of the declining family, Hawthorne writes:

"Gradually they have sunk out of sight; as old houses, here and there about the streets, get covered half-way to the eaves by the accumulation of new soil. From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea; a grey-headed shipmaster, in each generation, retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead,

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while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grandsire. The boy, also in due time, passed from the forecabin to the cabin, spent a tempestuous manhood, and returned from his world-wanderings, to grow old, and die, and mingle his dust with the natal earth."

Perhaps the decline in his family's importance had much to do with Hawthorne's preoccupation with the Colonial past in which his remote ancestors had played so conspicuous a part. His father, a sea-captain, died when Nathaniel was only four years old. For many years of her life Hawthorne's mother lived in seclusion, taking her meals apart from her son and two daughters, all of whom lived much to themselves. A psychologist would be tempted to make much of the effect of all these circumstances upon the impressionable mind of a four-year-old boy. The man Hawthorne was cheerful in his quiet way, but the romancer's artistic imagination was full of gloom.

Until he went to college, he seems to have had no boy companions. His solitude and a temporary lameness threw him upon books as a resource. The novels of Scott were probably the most influential books that he read. In 1821 he wrote to his mother—the letter contains a postscript: "Do not show this letter":

"... I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend the vacations with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have. The being a minister is of course out of the question. I should not think that even you could desire me to choose so dull a way of life. Oh, no, mother, I was not born to vegetate forever in one place, and to live and die as calm and tranquil as—a puddle of water. As to lawyers, there are so many of them already that one half of them (upon a moderate calculation) are in a state of actual starvation. A physician, then, seems to be 'Hobson's choice'; but yet I should not like to live by the diseases and infirmities of my fellow-creatures. And it would weigh very heavily on my conscience, in the course of my practice, if I should chance to send any unlucky patient 'ad inferum,' which being interpreted is, 'to the realms below.' Oh that I was rich enough to live without a profession! What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed, I think the illegibility of my handwriting is very author-like. How proud you would feel to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull! . . ."

At Bowdoin College, to which he went at the age of seventeen, he was a classmate of Longfellow. The two were closer friends in later life than in college. In 1863 Mrs. James T. Fields wrote in her diary:

"Hawthorne was in the same class at college with Longfellow, whom he says he could not appreciate at that time. He was always finely dressed and was a tremendous student. Hawthorne was careless in dress and no student, but always reading desultorily right and left. Now they are deeply appreciative of each other."

Among Hawthorne's intimate college friends were Franklin Pierce, later President of the United States, and Horatio Bridge, an officer in the Navy. In dedicating his *Twice Told Tales* (1837) to the latter, Hawthorne wrote:

"If anybody is responsible for my being at this day an author, it is yourself. I know not whence your faith came, but while we were lads together at a country college, gathering blueberries in study hours under those tall, academic pines, or watching the great logs as they tumbled along the current of the Androscoggin, or shooting pigeons or gray squirrels in the woods, or bat-fowling in the summer twilight, or catching trout in that shadowy little stream which, I suppose, is still wandering riverward through the forest, though you and I will never cast a line in it again; two idle lads, in short (as we need not fear to acknowledge now), doing a hundred things that the Faculty never heard of, or else it would have been the worse for us—still, it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny that he was to be a writer of fiction."

After his graduation in 1825, Hawthorne returned to Salem, where, except for an occasional excursion, he lived in seclusion for the next twelve years. Except for an unimportant novel, *Fanshawe* (1828), he published no book of fiction until 1837. Under the influence of Scott he wrote stories of New England, many of them laid in Colonial times. Some of these he destroyed; others he published in magazines and annuals, seldom or never under his own name, so that they made little impression. Hawthorne had almost nothing of that business acumen which enables a writer to attract attention to his work. In October, 1836, Park Benjamin, a forgotten poet and journalist, wrote in the *American Monthly Magazine*: "If Mr. Hawthorne would but collect his various tales and essays into one volume, we can assure him that their success would be brilliant—certainly in England, perhaps in this country." Without Hawthorne's knowledge, Horatio Bridge guaranteed the publisher against loss in order to have the first volume of *Twice Told Tales* (1837) published. While the book was still in press, he wrote to the discouraged Hawthorne:

"Whether your book will sell extensively may be doubtful; but that is of small importance in the first one you publish. At all events, keep up your spirits till the result is ascertained; and, my word for it, there is more honor and emolument in store for you, from your writings, than you imagine. The bane of your life has been self-distrust."

The book attracted some favorable notices, including a review by Longfellow in the *North American Review*. Poe's well-known review came in 1842, when Hawthorne published a two-volume edition with additional material. Hawthorne's seclusion was gradually being broken down. In response to a letter from Longfellow, he wrote:

"Not to burden you with my correspondence, I have delayed a rejoinder to your very kind and cordial letter, until now. It gratifies me that you have occasionally felt an interest in my situation; but your quotation from Jean Paul about the 'lark's nest' makes me smile. You would have been much nearer the truth if you had pictured me as dwelling in an owl's nest? for mine is about as dismal, and like the owl I seldom venture aboard till after dusk. By some witchcraft or other—for I really cannot assign any reasonable why and wherefor—I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. Since we last met, which you remember was in Sawtell's room, where you read a farewell poem to the relics of the class,—ever since that time I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I

was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself, and put me in a dungeon, and now I cannot find the key to let myself out,—and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. You tell me that you have met with troubles and changes. I know not what these may have been, but I can assure you that trouble is the next best thing to enjoyment, and that there is no fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in either its joys or sorrows. For the past ten years, I have not lived, but only dreamed of living. It may be true that there have been some unsubstantial pleasures here in the shade, which I might have missed in the sunshine, but you cannot conceive how utterly devoid of satisfaction all my retrospects are. I have laid up no treasure of pleasant remembrances against old age; but there is some comfort in thinking that future years can hardly fail to be more varied and therefore more tolerable than the past.

“You give me more credit than I deserve, in supposing that I have led a studious life. I have indeed turned over a good many books, but in so desultory a way that it cannot be called study, nor has it left me the fruits of study. As to my literary efforts, I do not think much of them, neither is it worth while to be ashamed of them. They would have been better, I trust, if written under more favorable circumstances. I have had no external excitement,—no consciousness that the public would like what I wrote, nor much hope nor a passionate desire that they should do so. Nevertheless, having nothing else to be ambitious of, I have been considerably interested in literature; and if my writings had made any decided impression, I should have been stimulated to greater exertions; but there has been no warmth of approbation, so that I have always written with benumbed fingers. I have another great difficulty in the lack of materials; for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stores of, and it is not easy to give a lifelike semblance to such shadowy stuff. Sometimes through a peep-hole I have caught a glimpse of the real world, and the two or three articles in which I have portrayed these glimpses please me better than the others. . . .”

The twelve years which Hawthorne lived in “the chamber under the eaves” left their mark upon him and upon his work. Years later he wrote:

“For a long, long time I have been occasionally visited with a singular dream; and I have an impression that I have dreamed it ever since I have been in England. It is, that I am still at college,—or, sometimes, even at school,—and there is a sense that I have been there unconscionably long, and have quite failed to make such progress as my contemporaries have done; and I seem to meet some of them with a feeling of shame and depression that broods over me as I think of it, even when awake. This dream, recurring all through these twenty or thirty years, must be one of the effects of that heavy seclusion in which I shut myself up for twelve years after leaving college, when everybody moved onward, and left me behind.”

One cause of Hawthorne's gradual withdrawal from his seclusion was his growing intimacy with the Peabody family, especially with Sophia, whom he married in 1842. Of the other sisters, Mary was to become the wife of Horace Mann, the educator, and Elizabeth was a well-known Transcendentalist. Sophia was something like a Transcendental edition of Mrs. Browning. Until her marriage she was an invalid with a desire to paint. Unable to marry, Hawthorne in 1839 became weigher and gauger at the Boston Custom House. Beginning his work with en-

thusiasm, he gradually tired of it. His work left him little energy or time for writing; and he never could write well when there were other demands upon his time and energies. In 1841 he took the very extraordinary step—for a man who had so little sympathy with reformers and Transcendentalists—of joining the Brook Farm community and investing his savings in that idealistic enterprise. He seems to have hoped to find a place where after his marriage he could live inexpensively with congenial associates. His experiences at Brook Farm are well known from his account of them in *The American Notebooks* and in *The Blithedale Romance*—although the romance is not of course to be taken literally. His initial enthusiasm gave place to dissatisfaction. Unable to get out the money he had invested, he did finally manage to get in exchange rent-free the historic Old Manse in Concord, where Emerson had once lived. The introductory essay in *Mosses from an Old Manse* contains a charming picture of the idyllic life of the newly married pair. Perhaps no author was ever more happily married.

In Concord Hawthorne saw something of Emerson, Thoreau, and lesser Transcendentalists. One of Emerson's visitors, Margaret Fuller, Hawthorne came almost to hate. He could never be quite fair to her or to others of "the damned mob of scribbling women." He was more just to Emerson, although he could never share his wife's hero-worship of him. "Mr. Emerson," he wrote in his journal in 1842, "is a great searcher for facts; but they seem to melt away and become unsubstantial in his grasp." Emerson had a high regard for Hawthorne the man but considered his books "not good for anything." How could the mystic sage, who at times almost denied the existence of evil, care for the books of a romancer whose one subject was sin?

In 1846 Hawthorne's influential Democratic friends secured him a position as head of the Custom House in Salem. Again, he found it difficult to write while actively engaged in other things. He had already begun *The Scarlet Letter*—planned, however, as a long short story, not a novel. In 1849 in a change of administration Hawthorne lost his position, much to his chagrin. He was a good hater, and he wrote in his portrait of Judge Pyncheon in *The House of the Seven Gables* a scathing satire on the Rev. Charles W. Upham, who had been active in securing Hawthorne's removal. In *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, Julian Hawthorne writes:

"On the day he received the news of his discharge, Hawthorne came home several hours earlier than usual; and when his wife expressed pleasure and surprise at his prompt reappearance, he called her attention to the fact that he had left his head behind him. 'Oh, then,' exclaimed Mrs. Hawthorne, buoyantly, 'you can write your book!' for Hawthorne had been bemoaning himself, for some time back, at not having leisure to write down a story that had long been weighing on his mind. He smiled, and remarked that it would be agreeable to know where their bread and rice were to come from while the story was writing. But his wife was equal to the occasion. Hawthorne had been in the habit of giving her, out of his salary, a weekly sum for household expenses; and out of this she had every week contrived secretly to save something, until now there was quite a large pile of gold [about \$150] in the drawer of her desk. This drawer she forthwith with elation opened, and triumphantly displayed to him the unsuspected treasure. So he began 'The Scarlet Letter' that afternoon; and blessed his stars, no doubt, for sending him such a wife."

In the transformation of Hawthorne the writer of none too popular short stories into Hawthorne the successful novelist, the Boston publisher, James T. Fields, played an important part,

which he later described in his *Yesterdays with Authors*. Thanks to Fields's sound judgment, *The Scarlet Letter*, when published in April, 1850, was a considerable popular success. The next year Hawthorne published *The House of the Seven Gables* and in 1852 *The Blithedale Romance*. Meanwhile he had left Salem for good. Soon after the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, he had settled for a time at Lenox in the Berkshire Hills. He now saw a good deal of Herman Melville, who lived at Pittsfield near by. Owing to the preservation of certain letters from Melville the younger author's reaction to the relation between the two is much clearer. It seems likely that something of Hawthorne's views of life and literature went into the making of *Moby-Dick*, which Melville was writing at the time and which he dedicated to Hawthorne. On August 29, 1850, Hawthorne wrote to Evert A. Duyckinck:

"I have read Melville's works with a progressive appreciation of the author. No writer ever put the reality before his reader more unflinchingly than he does in 'Redburn' and 'White Jacket.' 'Mardi' is a rich book, with depths here and there that compel a man to swim for his life. It is so good that one scarcely pardons the writer for not having brooded long over it so as to make it a great deal better."

On December 1, 1851, he wrote to Duyckinck concerning *Moby-Dick*: "What a book Melville has written! It gives me an idea of much greater power than his preceding ones."

When his old friend Franklin Pierce became a candidate for the Presidency, Hawthorne wrote a campaign biography—as Howells was to do for Lincoln in 1860—and was rewarded with an appointment in 1853 as United States Consul at Liverpool. He resigned this position in 1856 after he had saved some thirty thousand dollars from his salary and fees. He lived in Italy and England until 1860. Except for *The Marble Faun* (1860), this period of his life was not very productive, although *Our Old Home* (1863) and the French and Italian *Notebooks* make it easy to study his reaction to the new life he observed. Except for its novel background (Italy), *The Marble Faun* contains no very new theme. Perhaps Hawthorne saw Europe too late. Italian sculpture and painting interested him much; and, like many another American writer, he found that living in Europe had its advantages. In 1854 he wrote to Longfellow:

"Why don't you come over?—being now a man of leisure, and with nothing to keep you in America. If I were in your position, I think that I should make my home on this side of the water,—though always with an indefinite and never-to-be-executed intention to go back and die in my native land. America is a good land for young people, but not for those who are past their prime. It is impossible to grow old comfortably there, for nothing keeps you in countenance. . . . Everything is so delightfully sluggish here [England]! It is so pleasant to find people holding on to old ideas, and hardly now beginning to dream of matters that are already old with us. I have had enough of progress. Now I want to stand stock still, or rather to go back twenty years or so; and that is what I seem to have done in coming to England. Then, too, it is so agreeable to find one's self relieved from the tyranny of public opinion, or, at any rate, under the jurisdiction of quite a different public sentiment from what we have left behind us. A man of individuality and refinement can certainly live far more comfortably here—provided he has the means to live at all—than in New England. Be it owned, however, that I sometimes feel a tug at my very heartstrings when I think of my old home and friends."

In 1860 he returned to America and settled at the Wayside, in Concord, where he was living when Howells saw him on the occasion which he so memorably describes in his *Literary Friends*

and Acquaintance. The Civil War was fast approaching, but Hawthorne was not at first greatly moved by the events that led to it. He practically rebuked Emerson for saying that John Brown, if hanged, would "make the gallows glorious like the cross"; and added, "Nobody was ever more justly hanged." He had already written to his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Peabody: "I do assure you, that, like every other Abolitionist, you look at matters with an awful squint, which distorts everything within your line of vision . . ." When the Southern states began one by one to secede from the Union, he was not disposed to wish them back. "The States are too various and too extended to form really one country," he wrote to Bridge. "New England is quite as large a lump of earth as my heart can really take in." During the later years he worked on two romances which he left unfinished at his death in 1864. On May 24 Emerson wrote in his *Journals*:

"Yesterday, May 23, we buried Hawthorne in Sleepy Hollow, in a pomp of sunshine and verdure, and gentle winds. James Freeman Clarke read the service in the church and at the grave. Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Agassiz, Hoar, Dwight, Whipple, Norton, Alcott, Hillard, Fields, Judge Thomas, and I attended the hearse as pall-bearers. Franklin Pierce was with the family. The church was copiously decorated with white flowers delicately arranged. The corpse was unwillingly shown,—only a few moments to this company of his friends. But it was noble and serene in its aspect,—nothing amiss,—a calm and powerful forehead. A large company filled the church and the grounds of the cemetery. All was so bright and quiet that pain or mourning was hardly suggested, and Holmes said to me that it looked like a happy meeting.

"Clarke in the church said that Hawthorne had done more justice than any other to the shades of life, shown a sympathy with the crime in our nature, and, like Jesus, was the friend of sinners.

"I thought there was a tragic element in the event, that might be more fully rendered,—in the painful solitude of the man, which, I suppose, could not longer be endured, and he died of it.

"I have found in his death a surprise and disappointment. I thought him a greater man than any of his works betray, that there was still a great deal of work in him, and that he might one day show a purer power. Moreover, I have felt sure of him in his neighborhood, and in his necessities of sympathy and intelligence,—that I could well wait his time,—his unwillingness and caprice,—and might one day conquer a friendship. It would have been a happiness, doubtless to both of us, to have come into habits of unreserved intercourse. It was easy to talk to him,—there were no barriers,—only, he said so little, that I talked too much, and stopped only because, as he gave no indications, I feared to exceed. He showed no egotism or self-assertion, rather a humility, and, at one time, a fear that he had written himself out. One day, when I found him on the top of his hill, in the woods, he paced back the path to his house, and said, '*This path is the only remembrance of me that will remain.*' Now it appears that I waited too long."

Among the better biographies of Hawthorne are Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (1884); Horatio Bridge, *Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1893); George E. Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1902) in the American Men of Letters Series; Lloyd Morris, *The Rebellious Puritan: Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne* (1927); Newton Arvin,

Hawthorne (1929); and Edward Mather, *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Modest Man* (1941). Perhaps the two best are Woodberry's, which contains some excellent criticism, and Mather's, which is important for Hawthorne's life in England. Henry James's *Hawthorne* (1880), in the English Men of Letters Series, contains some excellent criticism, but as biography it is inadequate. See also Randall Stewart's important editions: *The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1932) and *The English Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1941). Austin Warren's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: Representative Selections* (1934), in the American Writers Series, contains an excellent introductory essay and a useful bibliography. Perhaps the best critical essay is that contained in W. C. Brownell, *American Prose Masters* (1909). Other important materials are: F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (1941); Leland Schubert, *Hawthorne the Artist* (1944); Lawrence S. Hall, *Hawthorne: Critic of Society* (1944); and John C. Gerber, "Form and Content in *The Scarlet Letter*," *New England Quarterly*, XVII, 25-55 (March, 1944); and Stanley T. Williams's chapter in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). Further references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

Important new biographical materials appeared in 1948 and 1949. In the latter year Mark Van Doren published a brief biographical study which contains some excellent criticism. In 1948 appeared Robert Cantwell's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The American Years*, which is to be followed by a second volume, and Randall Stewart's *Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Biography*. Stewart's biography leaves one with the impression that Hawthorne was more the normal person and less the recluse than one derives from earlier biographies. Edward H. Davidson's *Hawthorne's Last Phase* (1949) is an admirable study of the romances which Hawthorne left unfinished at his death.

from PASSAGES FROM THE AMERICAN NOTE-BOOKS (1868)

[*Brook Farm*]

(1841)

After Hawthorne's death, Mrs. Hawthorne compiled *Passages from the American Note-Books* (1868) from his notebooks and his letters to her. The account of his stay at Brook Farm does not appear in Randall Stewart's more carefully edited *The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne Based upon the Original Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (1932). Mrs. Hawthorne's omissions are indicated by three dots (. . .); the present editor's by (- - -). The best account of the Brook Farm community is Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm* (1900). See also Marianne Dwight, *Letters from Brook Farm, 1844-1847* (1928). The aims of the founders recall the Pantisocracy dreams of Coleridge and Southey. These aims are explained in a letter written by George Ripley, the moving spirit in the enterprise, dated November 9, 1840:

"Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more

natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest possible mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions."

BROOK FARM, OAK HILL, *April 13, 1841*.—
 . . . Here I am in a polar Paradise! I know not how to interpret this aspect of nature,—whether it be of good or evil omen to our enterprise. But I reflect that the Plymouth pilgrims arrived in the midst of storm, and stepped ashore upon mountain snow-drifts; and, nevertheless, they prospered, and became a great people,—and doubtless it will be the same with us. I laud my

stars, however, that you will not have your first impressions of (perhaps) our future home from such a day as this. . . . Through faith, I persist in believing that Spring and Summer will come in their due season; but the unregenerated man shivers within me, and suggests a doubt whether I may not have wandered within the precincts of the Arctic Circle, and chosen my heritage among everlasting snows. . . . Provide yourself with a good stock of furs, and, if you can obtain the skin of a polar bear, you will find it a very suitable summer dress for this region. . . .

I have not yet taken my first lesson in agriculture, except that I went to see our cows foddered, yesterday afternoon. We have eight of our own; and the number is now increased by a transcendental heifer belonging to Miss Margaret Fuller. She is very fractious, I believe, and apt to kick over the milk-pail. . . . I intend to convert myself into a milkmaid this evening, but I pray Heaven that Mr. Ripley may be moved to assign me the kindest cow in the herd, otherwise I shall perform my duty with fear and trembling.

I like my brethren in affliction very well; and, could you see us sitting round our table at meal times, before the great kitchen fire, you would call it a cheerful sight. Mrs. B— is a most comfortable woman to behold. She looks as if her ample bosom were stuffed full of tenderness,—indeed, as if she were all one great, kind heart. . . .

April 14, 10 A.M.— . . . I did not milk the cows last night, because Mr. Ripley was afraid to trust them to my hands, or me to their horns, I know not which. But this morning I have done wonders. Before breakfast, I went out to the barn and began to chop hay for the cattle, and with such “righteous vehemence,” as Mr. Ripley says, did I labor, that in the space of ten minutes I broke the machine. Then I brought wood and replenished the fires; and finally went down to breakfast, and ate up a huge mound of buck-wheat cakes. After breakfast, Mr. Ripley put a four-pronged instrument into my hands, which he gave me to understand was called a pitchfork; and he and Mr. Farley being armed with similar weapons, we all three commenced a gallant attack upon a heap of manure. This office being concluded, and I having purified myself, I sit down to finish this letter. . . .

Miss Fuller's cow hooks the other cows, and has made herself ruler of the herd, and behaves in a very tyrannical manner. . . . I shall make an excellent husbandman,—I feel the original Adam reviving within me.

April 16.— - - -

I have milked a cow!!! . . . The herd has rebelled against the usurpation of Miss Fuller's heifer; and, whenever they are turned out of the barn, she is compelled to take refuge under our protection. So much did she impede my labors by keeping close to me, that I found it necessary to give her two or three gentle pats with a shovel; but still she preferred to trust herself to my tender mercies, rather than venture among the horns of the herd. She is not an amiable cow, but she has a very intelligent face, and seems to be of a reflective cast of character. I doubt not that she will soon perceive the expediency of being on good terms with the rest of the sisterhood.

I have not yet been twenty yards from our house and barn; but I begin to perceive that this is a beautiful place. The scenery is of a mild and placid character, with nothing bold in its aspect; but I think its beauties will grow upon us, and make us love it the more, the longer we live here. There is a brook, so near the house that we shall be able to hear its ripple in the summer evenings, . . . but, for agricultural purposes, it has been made to flow in a straight and rectangular fashion, which does it infinite damage as a picturesque object. - - -

April 22.— . . . What an abominable hand do I scribble! but I have been chopping wood and turning a grindstone all the forenoon; and such occupations are likely to disturb the equilibrium of the muscles and sinews. It is an endless surprise to me how much work there is to be done in the world; but, thank God, I am able to do my share of it,—and my ability increases daily. What a great, broad-shouldered, elephantine personage I shall become by and by! - - -

May 4.— . . . My cold no longer troubles me, and all the morning I have been at work under the clear, blue sky, on a hillside. Sometimes it almost seemed as if I were at work in the sky itself, though the material in which I wrought

was the ore from our gold-mine.¹ Nevertheless, there is nothing so unseemly and disagreeable in this sort of toil as you could think. It defiles the hands, indeed, but not the soul. This gold ore is pure and wholesome substance, else our mother Nature would not devour it so readily, and derive so much nourishment from it, and return such a rich abundance of good grain and roots in requital of it.

The farm is growing very beautiful now,—not that we yet see anything of the peas and potatoes which we have planted; but the grass blushes green on the slopes and hollows. I wrote that word “blush” almost unconsciously; so we will let it go as an inspired utterance. When I go forth afield, . . . I look beneath the stone walls, where the verdure is richest, in hopes that a little company of violets, or some solitary bud, prophetic of the summer, may be there. . . . But not a wild flower have I yet found. - - -

I do not believe that I should be patient here if I were not engaged in a righteous and heaven-blessed way of life. When I was in the Custom-House and then at Salem I was not half so patient. . . .

We had some tableaux last evening, the principal characters being sustained by Mr. Farley and Miss Ellen Slade. They went off very well. . . .

I fear it is time for me—sod-compelling as I am—to take the field again.

May 11.— . . . This morning I arose at milking time in good trim for work; and we have been employed partly in an Augean labor of clearing out a wood-shed, and partly in carting loads of oak. This afternoon I hope to have something to do in the field, for these jobs about the house are not at all to my taste.

June 1.— . . . I have been too busy to write a long letter by this opportunity, for I think this present life of mine gives me an antipathy to pen and ink, even more than my Custom-House experience did. . . . In the midst of toil, or after a hard day's work in the gold-mine, my soul obstinately refuses to be poured out on paper. That abominable gold-mine! Thank God, we anticipate getting rid of its treasures in the course of two or three days! Of all hateful places that is the worst, and I shall never comfort myself for having spent so many days of blessed sunshine

¹ The manure pile.

there. It is my opinion that a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung-heap, or in a furrow of the field, just as well as under a pile of money. - - -

August 12.— . . . I am very well, and not at all weary, for yesterday's rain gave us a holiday; and, moreover, the labors of the farm are not so pressing as they have been. And, joyful thought! in a little more than a fortnight I shall be free from my bondage,— . . . free to enjoy Nature,—free to think and feel! . . . Even my Custom-House experience was not such a thralldom and weariness; my mind and heart were free. Oh, labor is the curse of the world, and nobody can meddle with it without becoming proportionately brutified! Is it a praiseworthy matter that I have spent five golden months in providing food for cows and horses? It is not so.

August 18.—I am very well, only somewhat tired with walking half a dozen miles immediately after breakfast, and raking hay ever since. We shall quite finish haying this week, and then there will be no more very hard or constant labor during the one other week I shall remain a slave.

August 22.— - - Since I last wrote, we have done haying, and the remainder of my bondage will probably be light. It will be a long time, however, before I shall know how to make a good use of leisure, either as regards enjoyment or literary occupation. . . .

It is extremely doubtful whether Mr. Ripley will succeed in locating his community on this farm. He can bring Mr. E— to no terms, and the more they talk about the matter, the further they appear to be from a settlement. We must form other plans for ourselves; for I can see few or no signs that Providence purposes to give us a home here. I am weary, weary, thrice weary, of waiting so many ages. Whatever may be my gifts, I have not hitherto shown a single one that may avail to gather gold. I confess that I have strong hopes of good from this arrangement with M—; but when I look at the scanty avails of my past literary efforts, I do not feel authorized to expect much from the future. Well, we shall see. Other persons have bought large estates and built splendid mansions with such little books as I mean to write; so that per-

haps it is not unreasonable to hope that mine may enable me to build a little cottage, or, at least to buy or hire one. But I am becoming more and more convinced that we must not lean upon this community. Whatever is to be done must be done by my own undivided strength. I shall not remain here through the winter, unless with an absolute certainty that there will be a house ready for us in the spring. Otherwise, I shall return to Boston,—still, however, considering myself an associate of the community, so that we may take advantage of any more favorable aspect of affairs. How much depends on these little books! Methinks if anything could draw out my whole strength, it would be the motives that now press upon me. Yet, after all, I must keep these considerations out of my mind, because an external pressure always disturbs instead of assisting me.

SALEM, *September 3*.— . . But really I should judge it to be twenty years since I left Brook Farm; and I take this to be one proof that my life there was an unnatural and unsuitable, and therefore an unreal, one. It already looks like a dream behind me. The real Me was never an associate of the community; there has been a spectral Appearance there, sounding the horn at day break, and milking the cows, and hoeing potatoes, and raking hay, toiling in the sun, and doing me the honor to assume my name. But this spectre was not myself. Nevertheless, it is somewhat remarkable that my hands have, during the past summer, grown very brown and rough, insomuch that many people persist in believing that I, after all, was the aforesaid spectral horn-sounder, cow-milker, potato-hoer, and hay-raker. But such people do not know a reality from a shadow. Enough of nonsense. I know not exactly how soon I shall return to the farm. Perhaps not sooner than a fortnight from tomorrow.

BROOK FARM, *September 22, 1841*.— . . Here I am again, slowly adapting myself to the life of this queer community, whence I seem to have been absent half a lifetime,—so utterly have I grown apart from the spirit and manners of the place. . . I was most kindly received; and the fields and woods looked very pleasant in the bright sunshine of the day before yesterday. I have a friendlier disposition towards the farm, now that I am no longer obliged to toil in its

stubborn furrows.² Yesterday and to-day, however, the weather has been intolerable,—cold, chill, sullen, so that it is impossible to be on kindly terms with Mother Nature. . . .

5 I doubt whether I shall succeed in writing another volume of Grandfather's Library while I remain here. I have not the sense of perfect seclusion which has always been essential to my power of producing anything. It is true, nobody intrudes into my room; but still I cannot be quiet. Nothing here is settled; everything is but beginning to arrange itself, and though I would seem to have little to do with aught beside my own thoughts, still I cannot but partake of the ferment around me. My mind will not be abstracted. I must observe, and think, and feel, and content myself with catching glimpses of things which may be wrought out hereafter. Perhaps it will be quite as well that I find myself 15 unable to set seriously about literary occupation for the present. It will be good to have a longer interval between my labor of the body and that of the mind. I shall work to the better purpose after the beginning of November. Meantime I shall see these people and their enterprise under a new point of view, and perhaps be able to determine whether we have any call to cast in our lot among them. - - -

30 *September 25*.— . . One thing is certain. I cannot and will not spend the winter here. The time would be absolutely thrown away so far as regards any literary labor to be performed. - - -

35 *September 27*.— - - -

I was elected to two high offices last night,—viz. to be a trustee of the Brook Farm estate, and Chairman of the Committee of Finance! . . . From the nature of my office, I shall have the chief direction of all the money affairs of the community, the making of bargains, the supervision of receipts and expenditures, etc., etc., etc. . . .

My accession to these august offices does not at all decide the question of my remaining here permanently. I told Mr. Ripley that I could not spend the winter at the farm, and that it was quite uncertain whether I returned in the spring. - - -

² Hawthorne had returned to Brook Farm as a boarder.

September 28.—A picnic party in the woods, yesterday, in honor of little Frank Dana's birthday, he being six years old. I strolled out, after dinner, with Mr. Bradford, and in a lonesome glade we met the apparition of an Indian chief, dressed in appropriate costume of blanket, feathers, and paint, and armed with a musket. Almost at the same time, a young gypsy fortune-teller came from among the trees, and proposed to tell my fortune. While she was doing this, the goddess Diana let fly an arrow, and hit me smartly in the hand. The fortune-teller and goddess were in fine contrast, Diana being a blonde, fair, quiet, with a moderate composure; and the gypsy (O.G.) a bright, vivacious, dark-haired, rich-complexioned damsel,—both of them very pretty, at least pretty enough to make fifteen years enchanting. Accompanied by these denizens of the wild wood, we went onward, and came to a company of fantastic figures, arranged in a ring for a dance or a game. There was a Swiss girl, an Indian squaw, a negro of the Jim Crow order, one or two foresters, and several people in Christian attire, besides children of all ages. Then followed childish games, in which the grown people took part with mirth enough,—while I, whose nature it is to be a mere spectator both of sport and serious business, lay under the trees and looked on. Meanwhile, Mr. Emerson and Miss Fuller,³ who arrived an hour or two before, came forth into the little glade where we were assembled. Here followed much talk. The ceremonies of the day concluded with a cold collation of cakes and fruit. All was pleasant enough,—an excellent piece of work,—“would 't were done!” It has left a fantastic impression on my memory, this intermingling of wild and fabulous characters with real and homely ones, in the secluded nook of the woods. I remember them, with the sunlight breaking through overshadowing branches, and they appearing and disappearing confusedly,—perhaps starting out of the earth; as if the everyday laws of nature were suspended for this particular occasion. There were the children, too, laughing and sporting about, as if they were at home among such strange shapes,—and anon bursting into loud uproar of lamentation, when the rude gambols of the merry archers chanced to overturn them. And apart, with a shrewd, Yankee ob-

servation of the scene, stands our friend Orange, a thick-set, sturdy figure, enjoying the fun well enough, yet rather laughing with a perception of its nonsensicalness than at all entering into the spirit of the thing. - - -

[Hints for Stories]

10 For Hawthorne, as the following extracts from his notebooks suggest, the germ of a story was often either something that could be used as a symbol or a psychological problem involving a moral question.

15 A sketch to be given of a modern reformer,—a type of the extreme doctrines on the subject of slaves, cold water, and other such topics. He goes about the streets haranguing most eloquently, and is on the point of making many converts, when his labors are suddenly interrupted by the keeper of a madhouse, whence he has escaped. 20 Much may be made of this idea.

The scene of a story or sketch to be laid within the light of a street-lantern; the time, when the lamp is near going out; and the catastrophe to be simultaneous with the last flickering gleam. 25

Cannon transformed to church-bells.

30 To make one's own reflection in a mirror the subject of a story.¹

A person to be writing a tale, and to find that it shapes itself against his intentions; that the characters act otherwise than he thought; that unforeseen events occur; and a catastrophe comes which he strives in vain to avert. It might shadow forth his own fate,—he having made himself one of the personages. 40

The race of mankind to be swept away, leaving all their cities and works. Then another human pair to be placed in the world, with native intelligence like Adam and Eve, but knowing nothing of their predecessors or of their own nature and destiny. They, perhaps, to be described as working out this knowledge by their sympathy with what they saw, and by their own feelings.² 45

³ Neither Emerson nor Margaret Fuller ever lived at Brook Farm.

¹ Cf. “Monsieur du Miroir.”

² Cf. “The New Adam and Eve.”

PREFACE TO THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

(1851)

Hawthorne's prefaces, some of which reveal him as an excellent critic of his own work, suggest the difficulties of a romancer writing in a period when realism was coming into fashion, especially in France and England.

When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former—while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public. He can hardly be said, however, to commit a literary crime even if he disregard this caution.

In the present work, the author has proposed to himself—but with what success, fortunately, it is not for him to judge—to keep undeviatingly within his immunities. The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect. The narrative, it may be, is woven of so humble a texture as to require this

advantage, and, at the same time, to render it the more difficult of attainment.

Many writers lay very great stress upon some definite moral purpose, at which they profess to aim their works. Not to be deficient in this particular, the author has provided himself with a moral,—the truth, namely, that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief; and he would feel it a singular gratification if this romance might effectually convince mankind,—or, indeed, any one man,—of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate, on the heads of an unfortunate posterity, thereby to maim and crush them, until the accumulated mass shall be scattered abroad in its original atoms. In good faith, however, he is not sufficiently imaginative to flatter himself with the slightest hope of this kind. When romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one. The author has considered it hardly worth his while, therefore, relentlessly to impale the story with its moral as with an iron rod,—or, rather, as by sticking a pin through a butterfly,—thus at once depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude. A high truth, indeed, fairly, finely, and skilfully wrought out, brightening at every step, and crowning the final development of a work of fiction, may add an artistic glory, but it is never any truer, and seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first.

The reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative. If permitted by the historical connection,—which, though slight, was essential to his plan,—the author would very willingly have avoided anything of this nature. Not to speak of other objections, it exposes the romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing his fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment. It has been no part of his object, however, to describe local manners, nor in any way to meddle with the characteristics of a community for whom he cherishes a proper respect and natural regard. He trusts not to be considered as unpardonably offending by laying out a street that infringes upon nobody's private

rights, and appropriating a lot of land which had no visible owner, and building a house of materials long in use for constructing castles in the air. The personages of the tale—though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the author's own making, or, at all events, of his own mixing; their virtues can shed no lustre, nor their defects redound, in the remotest degree, to the discredit of the venerable town of which they profess to be inhabitants. He would be glad, therefore, if—especially in the quarter to which he alludes—the book may be read strictly as a Romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex. Lenox, January 27, 1851.

from PREFACE TO THE MARBLE
FAUN (1860)

This Romance was sketched out during a residence of considerable length in Italy, and has been re-written and prepared for the press in England. The author proposed to himself merely to write a fanciful story, evolving a thoughtful moral, and did not purpose attempting a portraiture of Italian manners and character. He has lived too long abroad not to be aware that a foreigner seldom acquires that knowledge of a country at once flexible and profound, which may justify him in endeavoring to idealize its traits.

Italy, as the site of his Romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy,

lichens, and wall-flowers need ruin to make them grow.

[American Society as a Field for Fiction]
from HAWTHORNE (1879)

HENRY JAMES
(1843-1916)

With the Preface to *The Marble Faun*, compare the following notable passage in James's *Hawthorne* in the English Men of Letters Series.

- - - There is a phrase in the preface to his novel of *Transformation*,¹ which must have lingered in the minds of many Americans who have tried to write novels, and to lay the scene of them in the Western world. "No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land." The perusal of Hawthorne's American Note-Books operates as a practical commentary upon this somewhat ominous text. It does so at least to my own mind; it would be too much, perhaps, to say that the effect would be the same for the usual English reader. An American reads between the lines—he completes the suggestions—he constructs a picture. I think I am not guilty of any gross injustice in saying that the picture he constructs from Hawthorne's American diaries, though by no means without charms of its own, is not, on the whole, an interesting one. It is characterised by an extraordinary blankness—a curious paleness of colour and paucity of detail. Hawthorne, as I have said, has a large and healthy appetite for detail, and one is, therefore, the more struck with the lightness of the diet to which his observation was condemned. For myself, as I turn the pages of his journals, I seem to see the image of the crude and simple society in which he lived. I use these epithets, of course, not invidiously, but descriptively; if one desire to enter as closely as possible into Hawthorne's situation, one must endeavour to reproduce his circumstances. We are struck with the large number of elements that were absent from them, and the coldness, the thin-

¹ The English title of *The Marble Faun*.

ness, the blankness, to repeat my epithet, present themselves so vividly that our foremost feeling is that of compassion for a romancer looking for subjects in such a field. It takes so many things, as Hawthorne must have felt later in life, when he made the acquaintance of the denser, richer, warmer European spectacle—it takes such an accumulation of history and custom, such a complexity of manners and types, to form a fund of suggestion for a novelist. If Hawthorne had been a young Englishman, or a young Frenchman of the same degree of genius, the same cast of mind, the same habits, his consciousness of the world around him would have been a very different affair; however obscure, however reserved, his own personal life, his sense of the life of his fellow-mortals would have been almost infinitely more various. The negative side of the spectacle on which Hawthorne looked out, in his contemplative saunterings and reveries, might, indeed, with a little ingenuity, be made almost ludicrous; one might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys. nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public² schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class—no Epsom nor Ascot! Some such list as that might be drawn up of the absent things in American life—especially in the American life of forty years ago, the effect of which, upon an English or a French imagination, would probably, as a general thing, be appalling. The natural remark, in the almost lurid light of such an indictment, would be that if these things are left out, everything is left out. The American knows that a good deal remains; what it is that remains—that is his secret, his joke, as one may say. It would be cruel, in this

² In the English sense of the word, “public” schools are not state schools but such endowed preparatory schools as Eton, Harrow, and Rugby.

terrible denudation, to deny him the consolation of his natural gift, that “American humour” of which of late years we have heard so much.³

THE MAYPOLE OF MERRY MOUNT

(1835)

This story, which suggested the plot of Howard Hanson's opera, *Merry Mount*, was first published in *The Token* for 1836 and later included in *Twice Told Tales* (1837). Hawthorne prefixed the following note to the story:

“There is an admirable foundation for a philosophic romance in the curious history of the early settlement of Mount Wollaston, or Merry Mount. In the slight sketch here attempted, the facts, recorded on the grave pages of our New England annalists, have wrought themselves, almost spontaneously, into a sort of allegory. The masques, mummeries, and festive customs, described in the text, are in accordance with the manners of the age. Authority on these points may be found in Strutt's *Book of English Sports and Pastimes*.”

The following entry in his *American Note-Books* seems to foreshadow the story: “The world is so sad and solemn, that things meant in jest are liable, by an overpowering influence, to become dreadful earnest,—gayly dressed fantasies turning to ghostly and black-clad images of themselves.”

Bright were the days at Merry Mount, when the Maypole was the banner staff of that gay colony! They who reared it, should their banner be triumphant, were to pour sunshine over New England's rugged hills, and scatter flower

³ Joel Chandler Harris attacked James's conclusions in an article entitled “Provinciality in Literature—A Defense of Boston” (reprinted in Julia Collier Harris (ed.), *Joel Chandler Harris: Editor and Essayist*, 1931, pp. 186–191). After presenting his own theory: “. . . that no enduring work of the imagination has ever been produced save by a mind in which the provincial instinct was the controlling influence,” Harris contends that, for literary material, Hawthorne “had before him all the ruins of human passion, and . . . was surrounded by the antiquity of the soul.” He goes on: “We hardly know what Boston ought to do under the circumstances; but it does seem to us that the provinciality which gives us Hawthorne, Holmes, Whittier, Howells, Harte, and Lowell ought to be as well worth nurturing and cultivating as the exquisite culture which has given us (and the rest of the universe) Mr. James.”

seeds throughout the soil. Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire. Midsummer eve had come, bringing deep verdure to the forest, and roses in her lap, of a more vivid hue than the tender buds of Spring. But May, or her mirthful spirit, dwelt all the year round at Merry Mount, sporting with the Summer months, and revelling with Autumn, and basking in the glow of Winter's fireside. Through a world of toil and care she flitted with a dream-like smile, and came hither to find a home among the lightsome hearts of Merry Mount.

Never had the Maypole been so gayly decked as at sunset on midsummer eve. This venerated emblem was a pine-tree, which had preserved the slender grace of youth, while it equalled the loftiest height of the old wood monarchs. From its top streamed a silken banner, colored like the rainbow. Down nearly to the ground the pole was dressed with birchen boughs, and others of the liveliest green, and some with silvery leaves, fastened by ribbons that fluttered in fantastic knots of twenty different colors, but no sad ones. Garden flowers, and blossoms of the wilderness, laughed gladly forth amid the verdure, so fresh and dewy that they must have grown by magic on that happy pine-tree. Where this green and flowery splendor terminated, the shaft of the Maypole was stained with the seven brilliant hues of the banner at its top. On the lowest green bough hung an abundant wreath of roses, some that had been gathered in the sunniest spots of the forest, and others, of still richer blush, which the colonists had reared from English seed. O, people of the Golden Age, the chief of your husbandry was to raise flowers!

But what was the wild throng that stood hand in hand about the Maypole? It could not be that the fauns and nymphs, when driven from their classic groves and homes of ancient fable, had sought refuge, as all the persecuted did, in the fresh woods of the West. These were Gothic monsters, though perhaps of Grecian ancestry. On the shoulders of a comely youth uprose the head and branching antlers of a stag; a second, human in all other points, had the grim visage of a wolf; a third, still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the beard and horns of a venerable he-goat. There was the likeness of a bear erect, brute in all but his hind legs, which were adorned with pink silk stockings. And here again, almost as wondrous, stood a

real bear of the dark forest, lending each of his fore-paws to the grasp of a human hand, and as ready for the dance as any in that circle. His inferior nature rose half way, to meet his companions as they stooped. Other faces wore the similitude of man or woman, but distorted or extravagant, with red noses pendulous before their mouths, which seemed of awful depth, and stretched from ear to ear in an eternal fit of laughter. Here might be seen the Salvage Man, well known in heraldry, hairy as a baboon, and girdled with green leaves. By his side, a noble figure, but still a counterfeit, appeared an Indian hunter, with feathery crest and wampum belt. Many of this strange company wore fools-caps, and had little bells appended to their garments, tinkling with a silvery sound, responsive to the inaudible music of their gleesome spirits. Some youths and maidens were of soberer garb, yet well maintained their places in the irregular throng by the expression of wild revelry upon their features. Such were the colonists of Merry Mount, as they stood in the broad smile of sunset round their venerated Maypole.

Had a wanderer, bewildered in the melancholy forest, heard their mirth, and stolen a half-affrighted glance, he might have fancied them the crew of Comus, some already transformed to brutes, some midway between man and beast, and the others rioting in the flow of tipsy jollity that foreran the change. But a band of Puritans, who watched the scene, invisible themselves, compared the masques to those devils and ruined souls with whom their superstition peopled the black wilderness.

Within the ring of monsters appeared the two airiest forms that had ever trodden on any more solid footing than a purple and golden cloud. One was a youth in glistening apparel, with a scarf of the rainbow pattern crosswise on his breast. His right hand held a gilded staff, the ensign of high dignity among the revellers, and his left grasped the slender fingers of a fair maiden, not less gayly decorated than himself. Bright roses glowed in contrast with the dark and glossy curls of each, and were scattered round their feet, or had sprung up spontaneously there. Behind this lightsome couple, so close to the Maypole that its boughs shaded his jovial face, stood the figure of an English priest, canonically dressed, yet decked with flowers, in heathen fashion, and wearing a chaplet of the

native vine leaves. By the riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb, he seemed the wildest monster there, and the very Comus of the crew.

"Votaries of the Maypole," cried the flower-decked priest, "merrily, all day long, have the woods echoed to your mirth. But be this your merriest hour, my hearts! Lo, here stand the Lord and Lady of the May, whom I, a clerk of Oxford, and high priest of Merry Mount, am presently to join in holy matrimony. Up with your nimble spirits, ye morris-dancers, green men, and glee maidens, bears and wolves, and horned gentlemen! Come; a chorus now, rich with the old mirth of Merry England, and the wilder glee of this fresh forest; and then a dance, to show the youthful pair what life is made of, and how airily they should go through it! All ye that love the Maypole, lend your voices to the nuptial song of the Lord and Lady of the May!"

This wedlock was more serious than most affairs of Merry Mount, where jest and delusion, trick and fantasy, kept up a continual carnival. The Lord and Lady of the May, though their titles must be laid down at sunset, were really and truly to be partners for the dance of life, beginning the measure that same bright eve. The wreath of roses, that hung from the lowest green bough of the Maypole, had been twined for them, and would be thrown over both their heads, in symbol of their flowering union. When the priest had spoken, therefore, a riotous uproar burst from the rout of monstrous figures.

"Begin you the stave, reverend Sir," cried they all; "and never did the woods ring to such a merry peal as we of the Maypole shall send up!"

Immediately a prelude of pipe, cithern, and viol, touched with practised minstrelsy, began to play from a neighboring thicket, in such a mirthful cadence that the boughs of the Maypole quivered to the sound. But the May Lord, he of the gilded staff, chancing to look into his Lady's eyes, was wonder-struck at the almost pensive glance that met his own.

"Edith, sweet Lady of the May," whispered he reproachfully, "is yon wreath of roses a garland to hang above our graves, that you look so sad? O, Edith, this is our golden time! Tarnish it not by any pensive shadow of the mind; for it

may be that nothing of futurity will be brighter than the mere remembrance of what is now passing."

"That was the very thought that saddened me! How came it in your mind too?" said Edith, in a still lower tone than he, for it was high treason to be sad at Merry Mount. "Therefore do I sigh amid this festive music. And besides, dear Edgar, I struggle as with a dream, and fancy that these shapes of our jovial friends are visionary, and their mirth unreal, and that we are not true Lord and Lady of the May. What is the mystery in my heart?"

Just then, as if a spell had loosened them, down came a little shower of withering rose leaves from the Maypole. Alas, for the young lovers! No sooner had their hearts glowed with real passion than they were sensible of something vague and unsubstantial in their former pleasures, and felt a dreary presentiment of inevitable change. From the moment that they truly loved, they had subjected themselves to earth's doom of care and sorrow, and troubled joy, and had no more a home at Merry Mount. That was Edith's mystery. Now leave we the priest to marry them, and the masquers to sport round the Maypole, till the last sunbeam be withdrawn from its summit, and the shadows of the forest mingle gloomily in the dance. Meanwhile, we may discover who these gay people were.

Two hundred years ago, and more, the old world and its inhabitants became mutually weary of each other. Men voyaged by thousands to the West: some to barter glass beads, and such like jewels, for the furs of the Indian hunter; some to conquer virgin empires; and one stern band to pray. But none of these motives had much weight with the colonists of Merry Mount. Their leaders were men who had sported so long with life, that when Thought and Wisdom came, even these unwelcome guests were led astray by the crowd of vanities which they should have put to flight. Erring Thought and perverted Wisdom were made to put on masques, and play the fool. The men of whom we speak, after losing the heart's fresh gayety, imagined a wild philosophy of pleasure, and came hither to act out their latest day-dream. They gathered followers from all that giddy tribe whose whole life is like the festal days of soberer men. In their train were minstrels, not

unknown in London streets: wandering players, whose theatres had been the halls of noblemen; mummers, rope-dancers, and mountebanks, who would long be missed at wakes, church ales, and fairs; in a word, mirth-makers of every sort, such as abounded in that age, but now began to be discountenanced by the rapid growth of Puritanism. Light had their footsteps been on land, and as lightly they came across the sea. Many had been maddened by their previous troubles into a gay despair; others were as madly gay in the flush of youth, like the May Lord and his Lady; but whatever might be the quality of their mirth, old and young were gay at Merry Mount. The young deemed themselves happy. The elder spirits, if they knew that mirth was but the counterfeit of happiness, yet followed the false shadow wilfully, because at least her garments glittered brightest. Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life not even to be truly blest.

All the hereditary pastimes of Old England were transplanted hither. The King of Christmas was duly crowned, and the Lord of Misrule bore potent sway. On the Eve of St. John, they felled whole acres of the forest to make bonfires, and danced by the blaze all night, crowned with garlands, and throwing flowers into the flame. At harvest time, though their crop was of the smallest, they made an image with the sheaves of Indian corn, and wreathed it with autumnal garlands, and bore it home triumphantly. But what chiefly characterized the colonists of Merry Mount was their veneration for the Maypole. It has made their true history a poet's tale. Spring decked the hallowed emblem with young blossoms and fresh green boughs; Summer brought roses of the deepest blush, and the perfected foliage of the forest; Autumn enriched it with that red and yellow gorgeousness which converts each wildwood leaf into a painted flower; and Winter silvered it with sleet, and hung it round with icicles, till it flashed in the cold sunshine, itself a frozen sunbeam. Thus each alternate season did homage to the Maypole, and paid it a tribute of its own richest splendor. Its votaries danced round it, once, at least, in every month; sometimes they called it their religion, or their altar; but always, it was the banner staff of Merry Mount.

Unfortunately, there were men in the new world of a sterner faith than these Maypole wor-

shippers. Not far from Merry Mount was a settlement of Puritans, most dismal wretches, who said their prayers before daylight, and then wrought in the forest or the cornfield till evening made it prayer time again. Their weapons were always at hand to shoot down the straggling savage. When they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians. Their festivals were fast days, and their chief pastime the singing of psalms. Woe to the youth or maiden who did but dream of a dance! The selectman nodded to the constable; and there sat the light-heeled reprobate in the stocks; or if he danced, it was round the whipping post, which might be termed the Puritan Maypole.

A party of these grim Puritans, toiling through the difficult woods, each with a horseload of iron armor to burden his footsteps, would sometimes draw near the sunny precincts of Merry Mount. There were the silken colonists, sporting round their Maypole: perhaps teaching a bear to dance, or striving to communicate their mirth to the grave Indian; or masquerading in the skins of deer and wolves, which they had hunted for that especial purpose. Often, the whole colony were playing at blindman's buff, magistrates and all, with their eyes bandaged, except a single scapegoat, whom the blinded sinners pursued by the tinkling of the bells at his garments. Once, it is said, they were seen following a flower-decked corpse, with merriment and festive music, to his grave. But did the dead man laugh? In their quietest times, they sang ballads and told tales, for the edification of their pious visitors; or perplexed them with juggling tricks; or grinned at them through horse collars; and when sport itself grew wearisome, they made game of their own stupidity, and began a yawning match. At the very least of these enormities, the men of iron shook their heads and frowned so darkly that the revellers looked up, imagining that a momentary cloud had overcast the sunshine, which was to be perpetual there. On the other hand, the Puritans affirmed that, when a psalm was pealing from their place of worship, the echo which the forest sent them back seemed often like the chorus of a jolly catch, closing with a roar of laughter. Who but the fiend, and his bond-slaves, the

crew of Merry Mount, had thus disturbed them? In due time, a feud arose, stern and bitter on one side, and as serious on the other as anything could be among such light spirits as had sworn allegiance to the Maypole. The future complexion of New England was involved in this important quarrel. Should the grizzly saints establish their jurisdiction over the gay sinners, then would their spirits darken all the clime and make it a land of clouded visages, of hard toil, of sermon and psalm forever. But should the banner staff of Merry Mount be fortunate, sunshine would break upon the hills, and flowers would beautify the forest, and late posterity do homage to the Maypole.

After these authentic passages from history, we return to the nuptials of the Lord and Lady of the May. Alas! we have delayed too long, and must darken our tale too suddenly. As we glance again at the Maypole, a solitary sunbeam is fading from the summit, and leaves only a faint, golden tinge blended with the hues of the rainbow banner. Even that dim light is now withdrawn, relinquishing the whole domain of Merry Mount to the evening gloom, which has rushed so instantaneously from the black surrounding woods. But some of these black shadows have rushed forth in human shape.

Yes, with the setting sun, the last day of mirth had passed from Merry Mount. The ring of gay masquers was disordered and broken; the stag lowered his antlers in dismay; the wolf grew weaker than a lamb; the bells of the merridancers tinkled with tremulous affright. The Puritans had played a characteristic part in the Maypole mummeries. Their darksome figures were intermixed with the wild shapes of their foes, and made the scene a picture of the moment when waking thoughts start up amid the scattered fantasies of a dream. The leader of the hostile party stood in the centre of the circle, while the rout of monsters cowered around him, like evil spirits in the presence of a dread magician. No fantastic foolery could look him in the face. So stern was the energy of his aspect, that the whole man, visage, frame, and soul, seemed wrought of iron, gifted with life and thought, yet all of one substance with his headpiece and breastplate. It was the Puritan of Puritans; it was Endicott himself!

"Stand off, priest of Baal!" said he, with a grim frown, and laying no reverent hand upon

the surplice. "I know thee, Blackstone!¹ Thou art the man who couldst not abide the rule even of thine own corrupted church, and hast come hither to preach iniquity, and to give example of it in thy life. But now shall it be seen that the Lord hath sanctified this wilderness for his peculiar people. Woe unto them that would defile it! And first, for this flower-decked abomination, the altar of thy worship!"

And with his keen sword Endicott assaulted the hallowed Maypole. Nor long did it resist his arm. It groaned with a dismal sound; it showed leaves and rosebuds upon the remorseless enthusiast; and finally, with all its green boughs and ribbons and flowers, symbolic of departed pleasures, down fell the banner staff of Merry Mount. As it sank, tradition says, the evening sky grew darker, and the woods threw forth a more sombre shadow.

"There," cried Endicott, looking triumphantly on his work, "there lies the only Maypole in New England! The thought is strong within me that, by its fall, is shadowed forth the fate of light and idle mirthmakers, amongst us and on posterity. Amen, saith John Endicott."

"Amen!" echoed his followers.

But the votaries of the Maypole gave one groan for their idol. At the sound, the Puritan leader glanced at the crew of Comus, each a figure of broad mirth, yet, at this moment, strangely expressive of sorrow and dismay.

"Valiant captain," quoth Peter Palfrey, the Ancient of the band, "what order shall be taken with the prisoners?"

"I thought not to repent me of cutting down a Maypole," replied Endicott, "yet now I could find in my heart to plant it again, and give each of these bestial pagans one other dance round their idol. It would have served rarely for a whipping-post!"

"But there are pine-trees enow," suggested the lieutenant.

"True, good Ancient," said the leader.

"Wherefore, bind the heathen crew, and bestow on them a small matter of stripes apiece, as earnest of our future justice. Set some of the

¹ Did Governor Endicott speak less positively, we should suspect a mistake here. The Rev. Mr. Blackstone, though an eccentric, is not known to have been an immoral man. We rather doubt his identity with the priest of Merry Mount. (Author's note.)

rogues in the stocks to rest themselves, so soon as Providence shall bring us to one of our own well-ordered settlements, where such accommodations may be found. Further penalties, such as branding and cropping of ears, shall be thought of hereafter."

"How many stripes for the priest?" inquired Ancient Palfrey.

"None as yet," answered Endicott, bending his iron frown upon the culprit. "It must be for the Great and General Court to determine, whether stripes and long imprisonment, and other grievous penalty, may atone for his transgressions. Let him look to himself! For such as violate our civil order, it may be permitted us to show mercy. But woe to the wretch that troubleth our religion!"

"And this dancing bear," resumed the officer. "Must he share the stripes of his fellows?"

"Shoot him through the head! said the energetic Puritan. "I suspect witchcraft in the beast."

"Here be a couple of shining ones," continued Peter Palfrey, pointing his weapon at the Lord and Lady of the May. "They seem to be of high station among these misdoers. Methinks their dignity will not be fitted with less than a double share of stripes."

Endicott rested on his sword, and closely surveyed the dress and aspect of the hapless pair. There they stood, pale, downcast, and apprehensive. Yet there was an air of mutual support, and of pure affection, seeking aid and giving it, that showed them to be man and wife, with the sanction of a priest upon their love. The youth, in the peril of the moment, had dropped his gilded staff, and thrown his arm about the Lady of the May, who leaned against his breast, too lightly to burden him, but with weight enough to express that their destinies were linked together, for good or evil. They looked first at each other, and then into the grim captain's face. There they stood, in the first hour of wedlock, while the idle pleasures, of which their companions were the emblems, had given place to the sternest cares of life, personified by the dark Puritans. But never had their youthful beauty seemed so pure and high as when its glow was chastened by adversity.

"Youth," said Endicott, "ye stand in an evil case, thou and thy maiden wife. Make ready presently, for I am minded that ye shall both have a token to remember your wedding day!"

"Stern man," cried the May Lord, "how can I move thee? Were the means at hand, I would resist to the death. Being powerless, I entreat. Do with me as thou wilt, but let Edith go untouched!"

"Not so," replied the immitigable zealot. "We are not wont to show an idle courtesy to that sex, which requireth the stricter discipline. What sayest thou, maid? Shall thy silken bridegroom suffer thy share of the penalty, besides his own?"

"Be it death," said Edith, "and lay it all on me!"

Truly, as Endicott had said, the poor lovers stood in a woeful case. Their foes were triumphant, their friends captive and abased, their home desolate, the benighted wilderness around them, and a righteous destiny, in the shape of the Puritan leader, their only guide. Yet the deepening twilight could not altogether conceal that the iron man was softened; he smiled at the fair spectacle of early love; he almost sighed for the inevitable blight of early hopes.

"The troubles of life have come hastily on this young couple," observed Endicott. "We will see how they comport themselves under their present trials ere we burden them with greater. If, among the spoil, there be any garments of a more decent fashion, let them be put upon this May Lord and his Lady, instead of their glistening vanities. Look to it, some of you."

"And shall not the youth's hair be cut?" asked Peter Palfrey, looking with abhorrence at the love-lock and long glossy curls of the young man.

"Crop it forthwith, and that in the true pumpkin-shell fashion," answered the captain. "Then bring them along with us, but more gently than their fellows. There be qualities in the youth, which may make him valiant to fight, and sober to toil, and pious to pray; and in the maiden, they may fit her to become a mother in our Israel, bringing up babes in better nurture than her own hath been. Nor think ye, young ones, that they are the happiest, even in our lifetime of a moment, who misspend it in dancing round a Maypole!"

And Endicott, the severest Puritan of all who laid the rock foundation of New England, lifted the wreath of roses from the ruin of the Maypole, and threw it, with his own gauntleted hand, over the heads of the Lord and Lady of

the May. It was a deed of prophecy. As the moral gloom of the world overpowers all systematic gayety, even so was their home of wild mirth made desolate amid the sad forest. They returned to it no more. But as their flowery garland was wreathed of the brightest roses that had grown there, so, in the tie that united them, were intertwined all the purest and best of their early joys. They went heavenward, supporting each other along the difficult path which it was their lot to tread, and never wasted one regretful thought on the vanities of Merry Mount.

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN

(1835)

This story, which first appeared in the *New England Magazine* for April, 1835, was included in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). The story owes something to Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), from which we quote a few lines:

"The Devil, exhibiting himself ordinarily as a small Black Man, has decoy'd a fearful knot of proud, froward, ignorant, envious and malicious Creatures, to list themselves in his horrid Service, by entring their Names in a Book by him tendred unto them. These Witches . . . have met in Hellish Rendezvouses, wherein the Confessors do say, they have had their Diabolical Sacraments, imitating the *Baptism* and the *Supper* of our Lord."

In an article on "The Sources of Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown,'" *American Literature*, V, 342-348 (January, 1934), Miss Fannye Cherry argues that the story owes something also to Francis Bacon and to a story by Cervantes, "El Coloquio de los Perros" ("The Conversation of the Dogs"). The point of the story, says Austin Warren, who regards it as perhaps Hawthorne's finest short story, is "the devastating effect of moral scepticism." He adds: "The historical setting adds color and eases the strain of the supernatural penumbra; but the tale is universal in its implications, and transcends its setting." See also Richard H. Fogle, "Ambiguity and Clarity in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown,'" *New England Quarterly*, XVIII, 448-465 (December, 1945).

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her

own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year."

"My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?"

"Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

"Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee."

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

"Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him, "What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But no, no; 'twould kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven."

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

"There may be a devilish Indian behind every

tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!"

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him.

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago."

"Faith kept me back a while," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not

thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept—"

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker women so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with

due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at night fall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveller. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhangd witch, Goody

Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane —"

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse, but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said

his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much devilry as the best of us. More-

over, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if

bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given."

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. "Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your devilry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you."

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he

saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

"A grave and dark-clad company," quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity.

Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

"But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown, and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

"Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward

from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

"Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!"

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

"There," resumed the sable form, "are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other."

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith,

and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

"Lo, there ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race."

"Welcome," repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood, or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman

Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

THE BIRTHMARK

(1843)

"The Birthmark" was first published in Lowell's ill-fated *Pioneer* in March, 1843. It was included in Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). The theme of the story is recorded in two entries in the

American Note-Books: "A person to be in possession of something as perfect as mortal man has a right to demand; he tries to make it better, and ruins it entirely" and "A person to be the death of his beloved in trying to raise her to more than mortal perfection; yet this should be a comfort to him for having aimed so highly and holily." "Aminadab," as Austin Warren suggests, "is a reminiscence of Caliban, and plays the same rôle relative to Aylmer that the brute bears as servant to Prospero in *The Tempest*." Note also the following passage from Randall Stewart's edition of *The American Notebooks*:

"The case quoted in Combe's *Physiology*, from Pinel, of a young man of great talents and profound knowledge of chemistry, who had in view some new discovery of importance. In order to put his mind into the highest possible activity, he shut himself up, for several successive days, and used various methods of excitement; he had a singing girl with him; he drank spirits; smelled penetrating odors, sprinkled cologne-water round the room &c. &c. Eight days thus passed, when he was seized with a fit of frenzy, which terminated in mania."

In the latter part of the last century there lived a man of science, an eminent proficient in every branch of natural philosophy, who not long before our story opens had made experience of a spiritual affinity more attractive than any chemical one. He had left his laboratory to the care of an assistant, cleared his fine countenance from the furnace smoke, washed the stain of acids from his fingers, and persuaded a beautiful woman to become his wife. In those days when the comparatively recent discovery of electricity and other kindred mysteries of Nature seemed to open paths into the region of miracle, it was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of woman in its depth and absorbing energy. The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial aliment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new worlds for himself. We know not whether Aylmer possessed this degree of faith in man's ultimate control over Nature. He had devoted himself, however, too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining

itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to his own.

Such a union accordingly took place, and was attended with truly remarkable consequences and a deeply impressive moral. One day, very soon after their marriage, Aylmer sat gazing at his wife with a trouble in his countenance that grew stronger until he spoke.

"Georgiana," said he, "has it never occurred to you that the mark upon your cheek might be removed?"

"No, indeed," said she smiling; but perceiving the seriousness of his manner, she blushed deeply. "To tell you the truth it has been so often called a charm that I was simple enough to imagine it might be so."

"Ah, upon another face perhaps it might," replied her husband; "but never on yours. No, dearest Georgiana, you came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection."

"Shocks you, my husband!" cried Georgiana, deeply hurt; at first reddening with momentary anger, but then bursting into tears. "Then why did you take me from my mother's side? You cannot love what shocks you!"

To explain this conversation it must be mentioned that in the centre of Georgiana's left cheek there was a singular mark, deeply interwoven, as it were, with the texture and substance of her face. In the usual state of her complexion—a healthy though delicate bloom—the mark wore a tint of deeper crimson, which imperfectly defined its shape amid the surrounding rosiness. When she blushed it gradually became more indistinct, and finally vanished amid the triumphant rush of blood that bathed the whole cheek with its brilliant glow. But if any shifting motion caused her to turn pale, there was the mark again, a crimson stain upon the snow, in what Aylmer sometimes deemed an almost fearful distinctness. Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pygmy size. Georgiana's lovers were wont to say that some fairy at her birth hour had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek, and left this impress there in token of the magic endowments that were to give her such sway over all hearts. Many a desperate swain would have risked life for the privilege of pressing his lips to the mys-

terious hand. It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders. Some fastidious persons—but they were exclusively of her own sex—affirmed that the bloody hand, as they chose to call it, quite destroyed the effect of Georgiana's beauty, and rendered her countenance even hideous. But it would be as reasonable to say that one of those small blue stains which sometimes occur in the purest statuary marble would convert the Eve of Powers to a monster. Masculine observers, if the birthmark did not heighten their admiration, contented themselves with wishing it away, that the world might possess one living specimen of ideal loveliness without the semblance of a flaw. After his marriage,—for he thought little or nothing of the matter before,—Aylmer discovered that this was the case with himself.

Had she been less beautiful,—if Envy's self could have found aught else to sneer at,—he might have felt his affection heightened by the prettiness of this mimic hand, now vaguely portrayed, now lost, now stealing forth again and glimmering to and fro with every pulse of emotion that throbbed within her heart; but seeing her otherwise so perfect, he found this one defect grow more and more intolerable with every moment of their united lives. It was the fatal flaw of humanity which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain. The crimson hand expressed the ineludible gripe in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust. In this manner, selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death, Aylmer's sombre imagination was not long in rendering the birthmark a frightful object, causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty, whether of soul or sense, had given him delight.

At all the seasons which should have been their happiest, he invariably and without intending it, nay, in spite of a purpose to the contrary, reverted to this one disastrous topic. Trifling as it at first appeared, it so connected

itself with innumerable trains of thought and modes of feeling that it became the central point of all. With the morning twilight Aylmer opened his eyes upon his wife's face and recognized the symbol of imperfection; and when they sat together at the evening hearth his eyes wandered stealthily to her cheek, and beheld, flickering with the blaze of the wood fire, the spectral hand that wrote mortality where he would fain have worshipped. Georgiana soon learned to shudder at his gaze. It needed but a glance with the peculiar expression that his face often wore to change the roses of her cheek into a deathlike paleness, amid which the crimson hand was brought strongly out, like a bas-relief of ruby on the whitest marble.

Late one night when the lights were growing dim, so as hardly to betray the stain on the poor wife's cheek, she herself, for the first time, voluntarily took up the subject.

"Do you remember, my dear Aylmer," said she, with a feeble attempt at a smile, "have you any recollection of a dream last night about this odious hand?"

"None! none whatever!" replied Aylmer, starting; but then he added, in a dry, cold tone, affected for the sake of concealing the real depth of his emotion, "I might well dream of it; for before I fell asleep it had taken a pretty firm hold of my fancy."

"And you did dream of it?" continued Georgiana, hastily, for she dreaded lest a gush of tears should interrupt what she had to say. "A terrible dream! I wonder that you can forget it. Is it possible to forget this one expression?—'It is in her heart now; we must have it out!' Reflect, my husband; for by all means I would have you recall that dream."

The mind is in a sad state when Sleep, the all-involving, cannot confine her spectres within the dim region of her sway, but suffers them to break forth, affrighting this actual life with secrets that perchance belong to a deeper one. Aylmer now remembered his dream. He had fancied himself with his servant Aminadab, attempting an operation for the removal of the birthmark; but the deeper went the knife, the deeper sank the hand, until at length its tiny grasp appeared to have caught hold of Georgiana's heart; whence, however, her husband was inexorably resolved to cut or wrench it away.

When the dream had shaped itself perfectly

in his memory, Aylmer sat in his wife's presence with a guilty feeling. Truth often finds its way to the mind close muffled in robes of sleep, and then speaks with uncompromising directness of matters in regard to which we practise an unconscious self-deception during our waking moments. Until now he had not been aware of the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind, and of the lengths which he might find in his heart to go for the sake of giving himself peace.

"Aylmer," resumed Georgiana, solemnly, "I know not what may be the cost to both of us to rid me of this fatal birthmark. Perhaps its removal may cause cureless deformity; or it may be the stain goes as deep as life itself. Again: do we know that there is a possibility, on any terms, of unclasping the firm gripe of this little hand which was laid upon me before I came into the world?"

"Dearest Georgiana, I have spent much thought upon the subject," hastily interrupted Aylmer. "I am convinced of the perfect practicability of its removal."

"If there be the remotest possibility of it," continued Georgiana, "let the attempt be made at whatever risk. Danger is nothing to me; for life, while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust,—life is a burden which I would fling down with joy. Either remove this dreadful hand, or take my wretched life! You have deep science. All the world bears witness of it. You have achieved great wonders. Cannot you remove this little, little mark, which I cover with the tips of two small fingers? Is this beyond your power, for the sake of your own peace, and to save your poor wife from madness?"

"Noblest, dearest, tenderest wife," cried Aylmer rapturously, "doubt not my power. I have already given this matter the deepest thought—thought which might almost have enlightened me to create a being less perfect than yourself. Georgiana, you have led me deeper than ever into the heart of science. I feel myself fully competent to render this dear cheek as faultless as its fellow; and then, most beloved, what will be my triumph when I shall have corrected what Nature left imperfect in her fairest work! Even Pygmalion, when his sculptured woman assumed life, felt not greater ecstasy than mine will be."

"It is resolved, then," said Georgiana, faintly

smiling. "And, Aylmer, spare me not, though you should find the birthmark take refuge in my heart at last."

Her husband tenderly kissed her cheek—her right cheek—not that which bore the impress of the crimson hand.

The next day Aylmer apprised his wife of a plan that he had formed whereby he might have opportunity for the intense thought and constant watchfulness which the proposed operation would require; while Georgiana, likewise, would enjoy the perfect repose essential to its success. They were to seclude themselves in the extensive apartments occupied by Aylmer as a laboratory, and where, during his toilsome youth, he had made discoveries in the elemental powers of Nature that had roused the admiration of all the learned societies in Europe. Seated calmly in this laboratory, the pale philosopher had investigated the secrets of the highest cloud region and of the profoundest mines; he had satisfied himself of the causes that kindled and kept alive the fires of the volcano; and had explained the mystery of fountains, and how it is that they gush forth, some so bright and pure, and others with such rich medicinal virtues, from the dark bosom of the earth. Here, too, at an earlier period, he had studied the wonders of the human frame, and attempted to fathom the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster man, her masterpiece. The latter pursuit, however, Aylmer had long laid aside in unwilling recognition of the truth—against which all seekers sooner or later stumble—that our great creative Mother, while she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet severely careful to keep her own secrets, and, in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results. She permits us, indeed, to mar, but seldom to mend, and, like a jealous patentee, on no account to make. Now, however, Aylmer resumed these half-forgotten investigations,—not, of course, with such hopes or wishes as first suggested them, but because they involved much physiological truth and lay in the path of his proposed scheme for the treatment of Georgiana.

As he led her over the threshold of the laboratory, Georgiana was cold and tremulous. Aylmer looked cheerfully into her face, with intent to reassure her, but was so startled with the in-

tense glow of the birthmark upon the whiteness of her cheek that he could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder. His wife fainted.

"Aminadab! Aminadab!" shouted Aylmer, stamping violently on the floor.

Forthwith their issued from an inner apartment a man of low stature, but bulky frame, with shaggy hair hanging about his visage, which was grimed with the vapors of the furnace. This personage had been Aylmer's underworker during his whole scientific career, and was admirably fitted for that office by his great mechanical readiness, and the skill with which, while incapable of comprehending a single principle, he executed all the details of his master's experiments. With his vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that incrustated him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature while Aylmer's slender figure, and pale, intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element.

"Throw open the door of the boudoir, Aminadab," said Aylmer, "and burn a pastil."

"Yes, master," answered Aminadab, looking intently at the lifeless form of Georgiana; and then he muttered to himself, "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark."

When Georgiana recovered consciousness she found herself breathing an atmosphere of penetrating fragrance, the gentle potency of which had recalled her from her deathlike faintness. The scene around her looked like enchantment. Aylmer had converted those smoky, dingy, sombre rooms, where he had spent his brightest years in recondite pursuits, into a series of beautiful apartments not unfit to be the secluded abode of a lovely woman. The walls were hung with gorgeous curtains, which imparted the combination of grandeur and grace that no other species of adornment can achieve; and as they fell from the ceiling to the floor, their rich and ponderous folds, concealing all angles and straight lines, appeared to shut in the scene from infinite space. For aught Georgiana knew, it might be a pavilion among the clouds. And Aylmer, excluding the sunshine, which would have interfered with his chemical processes, had supplied its place with perfumed lamps, emitting flames of various hue, but all uniting in a soft, impurpled radiance. He now knelt by his wife's side, watching her earnestly, but without alarm; for he was confident in his science, and felt that

he could draw a magic circle round her within which no evil might intrude.

"Where am I? Ah, I remember," said Georgiana, faintly; and she placed her hand over her cheek to hide the terrible mark from her husband's eyes.

"Fear not, dearest!" exclaimed he. "Do not shrink from me! Believe me, Georgiana, I even rejoice in this single imperfection, since it will be such a rapture to remove it."

"Oh, spare me!" sadly replied his wife. "Pray do not look at it again. I never can forget that convulsive shudder."

In order to soothe Georgiana, and, as it were, to release her mind from the burden of actual things, Aylmer now put in practice some of the light and playful secrets which science had taught him among its profounder lore. Airy figures, absolutely bodiless ideas, and forms of unsubstantial beauty came and danced before her, imprinting their momentary footsteps on beams of light. Though she had some indistinct idea of the method of these optical phenomena, still the illusion was almost perfect enough to warrant the belief that her husband possessed sway over the spiritual world. Then again, when she felt a wish to look forth from her seclusion, immediately, as if her thoughts were answered, the procession of external existence flitted across a screen. The scenery and the figures of actual life were perfectly represented, but with that bewitching, yet indescribable difference which always makes a picture, an image, or a shadow so much more attractive than the original. When wearied of this, Aylmer bade her cast her eyes upon a vessel containing a quantity of earth. She did so, with little interest at first, but was soon startled to perceive the germ of a plant shooting upward from the soil. Then came the slender stalk; the leaves gradually unfolded themselves; and amid them was a perfect and lovely flower.

"It is magical!" cried Georgiana. "I dare not touch it."

"Nay, pluck it," answered Aylmer: "pluck it, and inhale its brief perfume while you may. The flower will wither in a few moments and leave nothing save its brown seed vessels; but thence may be perpetuated a race as ephemeral as itself."

But Georgiana had no sooner touched the flower than the whole plant suffered a blight,

its leaves turning coal-black as if by the agency of fire.

"There was too powerful a stimulus," said Aylmer, thoughtfully.

To make up for this abortive experiment, he proposed to take her portrait by a scientific process of his own invention. It was to be effected by rays of light striking upon a polished plate of metal. Georgiana assented; but, on looking at the result, was affrighted to find the features of the portrait blurred and indefinable; while the minute figure of a hand appeared where the cheek should have been. Aylmer snatched the metallic plate and threw it into a jar of corrosive acid.

Soon, however, he forgot these mortifying failures. In the intervals of study and chemical experiment he came to her flushed and exhausted, but seemed invigorated by her presence, and spoke in glowing language of the resources of his art. He gave a history of the long dynasty of the alchemists, who spent so many ages in quest of the universal solvent by which the golden principle might be elicited from all things vile and base. Aylmer appeared to believe that, by the plainest scientific logic, it was altogether within the limits of possibility to discover this long-sought medium; "but," he added, "a philosopher who should go deep enough to acquire the power would attain too lofty a wisdom to stoop to the exercise of it." Not lesser singular were his opinions in regard to the elixir vitæ. He more than intimated that it was his option to concoct a liquid that should prolong life for years, perhaps interminably; but that it would produce a discord in Nature which all the world, and chiefly the quaffer of the immortal nostrum, would find cause to curse.

"Aylmer, are you in earnest?" asked Georgiana, looking at him with amazement and fear. "It is terrible to possess such power, or even to dream of possessing it."

"Oh, do not tremble, my love," said her husband. "I would not wrong either you or myself by working such inharmonious effects upon our lives; but I would have you consider how trifling, in comparison, is the skill requisite to remove this little hand."

At the mention of the birthmark, Georgiana, as usual, shrank as if a red-hot iron had touched her cheek.

Again Aylmer applied himself to his labors.

She could hear his voice in the distant furnace room giving directions to Aminadab, whose harsh, uncouth, misshapen tones were audible in response, more like the grunt or growl of a brute than human speech. After hours of absence, Aylmer reappeared and proposed that she should now examine his cabinet of chemical products and natural treasures of the earth. Among the former he showed her a small vial, in which, he remarked, was contained a gentle yet most powerful fragrance, capable of impregnating all the breezes that blow across the kingdom. They were of inestimable value, the contents of that little vial; and, as he said so, he threw some of the perfume into the air and filled the room with piercing and invigorating delight.

"And what is this?" asked Georgiana, pointing to a small crystal globe containing a gold-colored liquid. "It is so beautiful to the eye that I could imagine it the elixir of life."

"In one sense it is," replied Aylmer; "or, rather, the elixir of immortality. It is the most precious poison that ever was concocted in this world. By its aid I could apportion the lifetime of any mortal at whom you might point your finger. The strength of the dose would determine whether he were to linger out years, or drop dead in the midst of a breath. No king on his guarded throne could keep his life if I, in my private station, should deem that the welfare of millions justified me in depriving him of it."

"Why do you keep such a terrific drug?" inquired Georgiana in horror.

"Do not distrust me, dearest," said her husband, smiling; "its virtuous potency is yet greater than its harmful one. But see! here is a powerful cosmetic. With a few drops of this in a vase of water, freckles may be washed away as easily as the hands are cleaned. A stronger infusion would take the blood out of the cheek, and leave the rosiest beauty a pale ghost."

"Is it with this lotion that you intend to bathe my cheek?" asked Georgiana anxiously.

"Oh, no," hastily replied her husband; "this is merely superficial. Your case demands a remedy that shall go deeper."

In his interviews with Georgiana, Aylmer generally made minute inquiries as to her sensations and whether the confinement of the rooms and the temperature of the atmosphere agreed with her. These questions had such a particular

drift that Georgiana began to conjecture that she was already subjected to certain physical influences, either breathed in with the fragrant air or taken with her food. She fancied likewise, but it might be altogether fancy, that there was a stirring up of her system—a strange, indefinite sensation creeping through her veins, and tingling, half painfully, half pleurably, at her heart. Still, whenever she dared to look into the mirror, there she beheld herself pale as a white rose and with the crimson birthmark stamped upon her cheek. Not even Aylmer now hated it so much as she.

To dispel the tedium of the hours which her husband found it necessary to devote to the processes of combination and analysis, Georgiana turned over the volumes of his scientific library. In many dark old tomes she met with chapters full of romance and poetry. They were the works of the philosophers of the middle ages, such as Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and the famous friar who created the prophetic Brazen Head. All these antique naturalists stood in advance of their centuries, yet were imbued with some of their credulity, and therefore were believed, and perhaps imagined themselves to have acquired from the investigation of Nature a power over Nature, and from physics a sway over the spiritual world. Hardly less curious and imaginative were the early volumes of the Transactions of the Royal Society, in which the members, knowing little of the limits of natural possibility, were continually recording wonders or proposing methods whereby wonders might be wrought.

But to Georgiana the most engrossing volume was a large folio from her husband's own hand, in which he had recorded every experiment of his scientific career, its original aim, the methods adopted for its development, and its final success or failure, with the circumstances to which either event was attributable. The book, in truth, was both the history and emblem of his ardent, ambitious, imaginative, yet practical and laborious life. He handled physical details as if there were nothing beyond them; yet spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul. Georgiana, as she read, revered Aylmer and loved him more profoundly than ever, but with a less entire de-

pendence on his judgment than heretofore. Much as he had accomplished, she could not but observe that his most splendid successes were almost invariably failures, if compared with the ideal at which he aimed. His brightest diamonds were the merest pebbles, and felt to be so by himself, in comparison with the inestimable gems which lay hidden beyond his reach. The volume, rich with achievements that had won renown for its author, was yet as melancholy a record as ever mortal hand had penned. It was the sad confession and continual exemplification of the shortcomings of the composite man, the spirit burdened with clay and working in matter, and of the despair that assails the higher nature at finding itself so miserably thwarted by the earthly part. Perhaps every man of genius in whatever sphere might recognize the image of his own experience in Aylmer's journal.

So deeply did these reflections affect Georgiana that she laid her face upon the open volume and burst into tears. In this situation she was found by her husband.

"It is dangerous to read in a sorcerer's books," said he with a smile, though his countenance was uneasy and displeased. "Georgiana, there are pages in that volume which I can scarcely glance over and keep my senses. Take heed lest it prove as detrimental to you."

"It has made me worship you more than ever," said she.

"Ah, wait for this one success," rejoined he, "then worship me if you will. I shall deem myself hardly unworthy of it. But come, I have sought you for the luxury of your voice. Sing to me, dearest."

So she poured out the liquid music of her voice to quench the thirst of his spirit. He then took his leave with a boyish exuberance of gaiety, assuring her that her seclusion would endure but a little longer, and that the result was already certain. Scarcely had he departed when Georgiana felt irresistibly impelled to follow him. She had forgotten to inform Aylmer of a symptom which for two or three hours past had begun to excite her attention. It was a sensation in the fatal birthmark, not painful, but which induced a restlessness throughout her system. Hastening after her husband, she intruded for the first time into the laboratory.

The first thing that struck her eye was the furnace, that hot and feverish worker, with the

intense glow of its fire, which by the quantities of soot clustered above it seemed to have been burning for ages. There was a distilling apparatus in full operation. Around the room were retorts, tubes, cylinders, crucibles, and other apparatus of chemical research. An electrical machine stood ready for immediate use. The atmosphere felt oppressively close, and was tainted with gaseous odors which had been tormented forth by the processes of science. The severe and homely simplicity of the apartment, with its naked walls and brick pavement, looked strange, accustomed as Georgiana had become to the fantastic elegance of her boudoir. But what chiefly, indeed almost solely, drew her attention was the aspect of Aylmer himself.

He was pale as death, anxious and absorbed, and hung over the furnace as if it depended upon his utmost watchfulness whether the liquid which it was distilling should be the draught of immortal happiness or misery. How different from the sanguine and joyous mien that he had assumed for Georgiana's encouragement!

"Carefully now, Aminadab, carefully, thou human machine, carefully, thou man of clay!" muttered Aylmer, more to himself than his assistant. "Now, if there be a thought too much or too little, it is all over."

"Ho! ho!" mumbled Aminadab. "Look, master, look!"

Aylmer raised his eyes hastily, and at first reddened, then grew paler than ever, on beholding Georgiana. He rushed towards her and seized her arm with a gripe that left the print of his fingers upon it.

"Why do you come hither? Have you no trust in your husband?" cried he, impetuously. "Would you throw the blight of that fatal birthmark over my labors? It is not well done. Go, prying woman, go!"

"Nay, Aylmer," said Georgiana with the firmness of which she possessed no stinted endowment, "it is not you that have a right to complain. You mistrust your wife; you have concealed the anxiety with which you watch the development of this experiment. Think not so unworthily of me, my husband. Tell me all the risk we run, and fear not that I shall shrink; for my share in it is far less than your own."

"No, no, Georgiana!" said Aylmer, impatiently; "it must not be."

"I submit," replied she calmly. "And, Ayl-

mer, I shall quaff whatever draught you bring me; but it will be on the same principle that would induce me to take a dose of poison if offered by your hand."

5 "My noble wife," said Aylmer, deeply moved; "I knew not the height and depth of your nature until now. Nothing shall be concealed. Know, then, that this crimson hand, superficial as it seems, has clutched its grasp into your being
10 with a strength of which I had no previous conception. I have already administered agents powerful enough to do aught except to change your entire physical system. Only one thing remains to be tried. If that fails us we are
15 ruined."

"Why did you hesitate to tell me this?" asked she.

"Because, Georgiana," said Aylmer, in a low voice, "there is danger."

20 "Danger? There is but one danger—that this horrible stigma shall be left upon my cheek!" cried Georgiana. "Remove it, remove it, whatever be the cost, or we shall both go mad!"

25 "'Heaven knows your words are too true," said Aylmer, sadly. "And now, dearest, return to your boudoir. In a little while all will be tested."

He conducted her back and took leave of her with a solemn tenderness which spoke far more than his words how much was now at stake. After his departure Georgiana became rapt in musings. She considered the character of Aylmer, and did it completer justice than at any previous moment. Her heart exulted, while it trembled, at his honorable love—so pure and lofty that it would accept nothing less than perfection nor miserably make itself contented with an earthlier nature than he had dreamed of. She felt how much more precious was such
30 a sentiment than that meaner kind which would have borne with the imperfection for her sake, and have been guilty of treason to holy love by degrading its perfect idea to the level of the actual; and with her whole spirit she prayed that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception. Longer than one moment she well knew it could not be; for his spirit was ever on the march, ever ascending, and each instant required something that was beyond the scope of the instant before.

The sound of her husband's footsteps aroused her. He bore a crystal goblet containing a liquor

colorless as water, but bright enough to be the draught of immortality. Aylmer was pale; but it seemed rather the consequence of a highly-wrought state of mind and tension of spirit than of fear or doubt.

"The concoction of the draught has been perfect," said he, in answer to Georgiana's look. "Unless all my science have deceived me, it cannot fail."

"Save on your account, my dearest Aylmer," observed his wife, "I might wish to put off this birthmark of mortality by relinquishing mortality itself in preference to any other mode. Life is but a sad possession to those who have attained precisely the degree of moral advancement at which I stand. Were I weaker and blinder it might be happiness. Were I stronger, it might be endured hopefully. But, being what I find myself, methinks I am of all mortals the most fit to die."

"You are fit for heaven without tasting death!" replied her husband. "But why do we speak of dying? The draught cannot fail. Behold its effect upon this plant."

On the window seat there stood a geranium diseased with yellow blotches, which had overspread all its leaves. Aylmer poured a small quantity of the liquid upon the soil in which it grew. In a little time, when the roots of the plant had taken up the moisture, the unsightly blotches began to be extinguished in a living verdure.

"There needed no proof," said Georgiana, quietly. "Give me the goblet. I joyfully stake all upon your word."

"Drink, then, thou lofty creature!" exclaimed Aylmer, with fervid admiration. "There is no taint of imperfection on thy spirit. Thy sensible frame, too, shall soon be all perfect."

She quaffed the liquid and returned the goblet to his hand.

"It is grateful," said she with a placid smile. "Methinks it is like water from a heavenly fountain; for it contains I know not what of unobtrusive fragrance and deliciousness. It allays a feverish thirst that had parched me for many days. Now, dearest, let me sleep. My earthly senses are closing over my spirit like the leaves around the heart of a rose at sunset."

She spoke the last words with a gentle reluctance, as if it required almost more energy than she could command to pronounce the faint and lingering syllables. Scarcely had they loitered

through her lips ere she was lost in slumber. Aylmer sat by her side, watching her aspect with the emotions proper to a man the whole value of whose existence was involved in the process now to be tested. Mingled with this mood, however, was the philosophic investigation characteristic of the man of science. Not the minutest symptom escaped him. A heightened flush of the cheek, a slight irregularity of breath, a quiver of the eyelid, a hardly perceptible tremor through the frame,—such were the details which, as the moments passed, he wrote down in his folio volume. Intense thought had set its stamp upon every previous page of that volume, but the thoughts of years were all concentrated upon the last.

While thus employed, he failed not to gaze often at the fatal hand, and not without a shudder. Yet once, by a strange and unaccountable impulse, he pressed it with his lips. His spirit recoiled, however, in the very act; and Georgiana, out of the midst of her deep sleep, moved uneasily and murmured as if in remonstrance. Again Aylmer resumed his watch. Nor was it without avail. The crimson hand, which at first had been strongly visible upon the marble paleness of Georgiana's cheek, now grew more faintly outlined. She remained not less pale than ever; but the birthmark, with every breath that came and went, lost somewhat of its former distinctness. Its presence had been awful; its departure was more awful still. Watch the stain of the rainbow fading out of the sky, and you will know how that mysterious symbol passed away.

"By Heaven! it is well-nigh gone!" said Aylmer to himself, in almost irrepressible ecstasy. "I can scarcely trace it now. Success! success! And now it is like the faintest rose color. The lightest flush of blood across her cheek would overcome it. But she is so pale!"

He drew aside the window curtain and suffered the light of natural day to fall into the room and rest upon her cheek. At the same time he heard a gross, hoarse chuckle, which he had long known as his servant Aminadab's expression of delight.

"Ah, clod! ah, earthly mass!" cried Aylmer, laughing in a sort of frenzy, "you have served me well! Matter and spirit—earth and heaven—have both done their part in this! Laugh, thing of the senses! You have earned the right to laugh."

These exclamations broke Georgiana's sleep. She slowly unclosed her eyes and gazed into the mirror which her husband had arranged for that purpose. A faint smile flitted over her lips when she recognized how barely perceptible was now that crimson hand which had once blazed forth with such disastrous brilliancy as to scare away all their happiness. But then her eyes sought Aylmer's face with a trouble and anxiety that he could by no means account for.

"My poor Aylmer!" murmured she.

"Poor? Nay, richest, happiest, most favored!" exclaimed he. "My peerless bride, it is successful! You are perfect!"

"My poor Aylmer," she repeated, with a more than human tenderness, "you have aimed loftily; you have done nobly. Do not repent that with so high and pure a feeling, you have rejected the best the earth could offer, Aylmer, dearest Aylmer, I am dying!"

Alas! it was too true! The fatal hand had grappled with the mystery of life, and was the bond by which an angelic spirit kept itself in union with a mortal frame. As the last crimson tint of the birthmark—that sole token of human imperfection—faded from her cheek, the parting breath of the now perfect woman passed into the atmosphere, and her soul, lingering a moment near her husband, took its heavenward flight. Then a hoarse, chuckling laugh was heard again! Thus ever does the gross fatality of earth exult in its invariable triumph over the immortal essence which, in this dim sphere of half development, demands the completeness of a higher state. Yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the self-same texture with the celestial. The momentary circumstance was too strong for him; he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and, living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present.

RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER

from the WRITINGS OF AUBÉPINE

(1844)

This story first appeared in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* for December, 1844. It was republished in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846) with the subtitle "From the Writings of

Aubépine." (*Aubépine* is French for *hawthorn*.) Two entries in Hawthorne's notebooks foreshadow the story. The first, somewhat inaccurately quoted from Sir Thomas Browne, should read: "A story there passeth of an Indian King, that sent unto Alexander [the Great] a fair woman fed with Aconites and other poysons, with this intent, either by converse or copulation complexionally to destroy him." The other passage reads:

"Madame Calderon de la B (in *Life in Mexico*) speaks of persons who have been inoculated with the venom of rattlesnakes, by pricking them in various places with the tooth. These persons are thus secured forever after against the bite of any venomous reptile. They have the power of calling snakes, and feel great pleasure in playing with and handling them. Their own bite becomes poisonous to people not inoculated in the same manner. Thus a part of the serpent's nature appears to be transfused into them."

The second passage strongly suggests also Holmes's *Elsie Venner*, which was not published until 1861.

We do not remember to have seen any translated specimens of the productions of M. de l'Aubépine—a fact the less to be wondered at, as his very name is unknown to many of his own countrymen as well as to the student of foreign literature. As a writer, he seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another, have their share in all the current literature of the world) and the great body of pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude. If not too refined, at all events too remote, too shadowy, and unsubstantial in his modes of development to suit the taste of the latter class, and yet too popular to satisfy the spiritual or metaphysical requisitions of the former, he must necessarily find himself without an audience, except here and there an individual or possibly an isolated clique. His writings, to do them justice, are not altogether destitute of fancy and originality; they might have won him greater reputation but for an inveterate love of allegory, which is apt to invest his plots and characters with the aspect of scenery and people in the clouds, and to steal away the human warmth out of his conceptions. His fictions are sometimes historical, sometimes of the present day, and sometimes, so far as can be discovered, have little or no reference either to time or space. In any case, he generally contents himself with a very slight embroidery of outward manners—the faintest possible counterfeit of real life,—and endeavors to create an interest by some less obvious peculiarity of the subject. Occasionally a breath of Nature, a raindrop of pathos and tenderness, or a gleam of humor, will find its way into the midst of his fantastic imagery, and make us feel as

if, after all, we were yet within the limits of our native earth. We will only add to this very cursory notice that M. de l'Aubépine's productions, if the reader chance to take them in precisely the proper point of view, may amuse a leisure hour as well as those of a brighter man; if otherwise, they can hardly fail to look excessively like nonsense---

A young man, named Giovanni Guasconti, came, very long ago, from the more southern region of Italy, to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heartbreak natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment.

"Holy Virgin, signor!" cried old Dame Lisabetta, who, won by the youth's remarkable beauty of person, was kindly endeavoring to give the chamber a habitable air, "what a sigh was that to come out of a young man's heart! Do you find this old mansion gloomy? For the love of Heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in Naples."

Guasconti mechanically did as the old woman advised, but could not quite agree with her that the Paduan sunshine was as cheerful as that of southern Italy. Such as it was, however, it fell upon a garden beneath the window and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants, which seemed to have been cultivated with exceeding care.

"Does this garden belong to the house?" asked Giovanni.

"Heaven forbid, signor, unless it were fruitful of better pot herbs than any that grow there now," answered old Lisabetta. "No; that garden is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini, the famous doctor, who, I

warrant him, has been heard of as far as Naples. It is said that he distils these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm. Oftentimes you may see the signor doctor at work, and perchance the signora, his daughter, too, gathering the strange flowers that grow in the garden."

The old woman had now done what she could for the aspect of the chamber; and, commending the young man to the protection of the saints, took her departure.

Giovanni still found no better occupation than to look down into the garden beneath his window. From its appearance, he judged it to be one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy or in the world. Or, not improbably, it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre sculptured with rare art, but so wofully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever. A little gurgling sound ascended to the young man's window, and made him feel as if the fountain were an immortal spirit that sung its song unceasingly and without heeding the vicissitudes around it, while one century embodied it in marble and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil. All about the pool into which the water subsided grew various plants, that seemed to require a plentiful supply of moisture for the nourishment of gigantic leaves, and, in some instances, flowers gorgeously magnificent. There was one shrub in particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the lustre and richness of a gem; and the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate the garden, even had there been no sunshine. Every portion of the soil was peopled with plants and herbs, which, if less beautiful, still bore tokens of assiduous care, as if all had their individual virtues, known to the scientific mind that fostered them. Some were placed in urns, rich with old carving, and others in common garden pots; some crept serpent-like along the ground or climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent was offered them. One plant had wreathed itself round a statue of Vertumnus, which was thus quite veiled and shrouded in a

drapery of hanging foliage, so happily arranged that it might have served a sculptor for a study.

While Giovanni stood at the window he heard a rustling behind a screen of leaves, and became aware that a person was at work in the garden. His figure soon emerged into view, and showed itself to be that of no common laborer, but a tall, emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking man, dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair, a thin, gray beard, and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart.

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path: it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew in this shape and another in that, and wherefore such and such flowers differed among themselves in hue and perfume. Nevertheless, in spite of this deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch or the direct inhaling of their odors with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably; for the man's demeanor was that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts, or deadly snakes, or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality. It was strangely frightful to the young man's imagination to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden, that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? And this man, with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow,—was he the Adam?

The distrustful gardener, while plucking away the dead leaves or pruning the too luxuriant growth of the shrubs, defended his hands with a pair of thick gloves. Nor were these his only armor. When, in his walk through the garden, he came to the magnificent plant that hung its purple gems beside the marble fountain, he placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils, as if all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice; but, finding his task still too

dangerous, he drew back, removed the mask, and called loudly, but in the infirm voice of a person affected with inward disease.

"Beatrice! Beatrice!"

5 "Here am I, my father. What would you?" cried a rich and youthful voice from the window of the opposite house—a voice as rich as a tropical sunset, and which made Giovanni, though he knew not why, think of deep hues of purple or crimson and of perfumes heavily delectable. "Are you in the garden?"

"Yes, Beatrice," answered the gardener, "and I need your help."

Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl, arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day, and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health, and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely, in their luxuriance, by her virgin zone. Yet Giovanni's fancy must have grown morbid while he looked down into the garden; for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they, more beautiful than the richest of them, but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden path, it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants which her father had most sedulously avoided.

35 "Here, Beatrice," said the latter, "see how many needful offices require to be done to our chief treasure. Yet, shattered as I am, my life might pay the penalty of approaching it so closely as circumstances demand. Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge."

45 "And gladly will I undertake it," cried again the rich tones of the young lady, as she bent towards the magnificent plant and opened her arms as if to embrace it. "Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee; and thou shalt reward her with thy kisses and perfumed breath, which to her is as the breath of life."

50 Then, with all the tenderness in her manner that was so strikingly expressed in her words, she busied herself with such attentions as the

plant seemed to require; and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower, or one sister performing the duties of affection to another. The scene soon terminated. Whether Dr. Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden, or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger's face, he now took his daughter's arm and retired. Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants and steal upward past the open window; and Giovanni, closing the lattice, went to his couch and dreamed of a rich flower and beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape.

But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. Giovanni's first movement, on starting from sleep, was to throw open the window and gaze down into the garden which his dreams had made so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised and a little ashamed to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be, in the first rays of the sun which gilded the dew-drops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced that, in the heart of the barren city, he had the privilege of overlooking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language to keep him in communion with Nature. Neither the sickly and thoughtworn Dr. Giacomo Rappaccini, it is true, nor his brilliant daughter, were now visible; so that Giovanni could not determine how much of the singularity which he attributed to both was due to their own qualities and how much to his wonder-working fancy; but he was inclined to take a most rational view of the whole matter.

In the course of the day he paid his respects to Signor Pietro Baglioni, professor of medicine in the university, a physician of eminent repute, to whom Giovanni had brought a letter of introduction. The professor was an elderly personage, apparently of genial nature, and habits that might almost be called jovial. He kept the young man to dinner, and made himself very

agreeable by the freedom and liveliness of his conversation, especially when warmed by a flask or two of Tuscan wine. Giovanni, conceiving that men of science, inhabitants of the same city, must needs be on familiar terms with one another, took an opportunity to mention the name of Dr. Rappaccini. But the professor did not respond with so much cordiality as he had anticipated.

"Ill would it become a teacher of the divine art of medicine," said Professor Pietro Baglioni, in answer to a question of Giovanni, "to withhold due and well-considered praise of a physician so eminently skilled as Rappaccini; but, on the other hand, I should answer it but scantily to my conscience were I to permit a worthy youth like yourself, Signor Giovanni, the son of an ancient friend, to imbibe erroneous ideas respecting a man who might hereafter chance to hold your life and death in his hands. The truth is, our worshipful Dr. Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty—with perhaps one single exception—in Padua, or all Italy; but there are certain grave objections to his professional character."

"And what are they?" asked the young man.

"Has my friend Giovanni any disease of body or heart, that he is so inquisitive about physicians?" said the professor, with a smile. "But as for Rappaccini, it is said of him—and I, who know the man well, can answer for its truth—that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge."

"Methinks he is an awful man indeed," remarked Guasconti, mentally recalling the cold and purely intellectual aspect of Rappaccini. "And yet, worshipful professor, is it not a noble spirit? Are there many men capable of so spiritual a love of science?"

"God forbid," answered the professor, somewhat testily; "at least, unless they take sounder views of the healing art than those adopted by Rappaccini. It is his theory that all medicinal virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons. These he cultivates with his own hands, and is said even to

have produced new varieties of poison, more horribly deleterious than Nature, without the assistance of this learned person, would ever have plagued the world withal. That the signor doctor does less mischief than might be expected with such dangerous substances is undeniable. Now and then, it must be owned, he has effected, or seemed to effect, a marvellous cure; but, to tell you my private mind, Signor Giovanni, he should receive little credit for such instances of success,—they being probably the work of chance,—but should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work.”

The youth might have taken Baglioni’s opinions with many grains of allowance had he known that there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage. If the reader be inclined to judge for himself, we refer him to certain black-letter tracts on both sides, preserved in the medical department of the University of Padua.

“I know not, most learned professor,” returned Giovanni, after musing on what had been said of Rappaccini’s exclusive zeal for science,—“I know not how dearly this physician may love his art; but surely there is one object more dear to him. He has a daughter.”

“Aha!” cried the professor, with a laugh. “So now our friend Giovanni’s secret is out. You have heard of this daughter, whom all the young men in Padua are wild about, though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face. I know little of the Signora Beatrice save that Rappaccini is said to have instructed her deeply in his science, and that, young and beautiful as fame reports her, she is already qualified to fill a professor’s chair. Perchance her father destines her for mine! Other absurd rumors there be, not worth talking about or listening to. So now, Signor Giovanni, drink off your glass of lachryma.”

Guasconti returned to his lodgings somewhat heated with the wine he had quaffed, and which caused his brain to swim with strange fantasies in reference to Dr. Rappaccini and the beautiful Beatrice. On his way, happening to pass by a florist’s he bought a fresh bouquet of flowers.

Ascending to his chamber, he seated himself near the window, but within the shadow thrown

by the depth of the wall, so that he could look down into the garden with little risk of being discovered. All beneath his eye was a solitude. The strange plants were basking in the sunshine, and now and then nodding gently to one another, as if in acknowledgment of sympathy and kindred. In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air, and gleamed back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was steeped in it. At first, as we have said, the garden was a solitude. Soon, however,—as Giovanni had half hoped, half feared, would be the case,—a figure appeared beneath the antique sculptured portal, and came down between the rows of plants, inhaling their various perfumes as if she were one of those beings of old classic fable that lived upon sweet odors. On again beholding Beatrice, the young man was even startled to perceive how much her beauty exceeded his recollection of it; so brilliant, so vivid, was its character, that she glowed amid the sunlight, and, as Giovanni whispered to himself, positively illuminated the more shadowy intervals of the garden path. Her face being now more revealed than on the former occasion, he was struck by its expression of simplicity and sweetness,—qualities that had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew what manner of mortal she might be. Nor did he fail again to observe, or imagine, an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub that hung its gemlike flowers over the fountain,—a resemblance which Beatrice seemed to have indulged a fantastic humor in heightening, both by the arrangement of her dress and the selection of its hues.

Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms, as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace—so intimate that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers.

“Give me thy breath, my sister,” exclaimed Beatrice; “for I am faint with common air. And give me this flower of thine, which I separate with gentlest fingers from the stem and place it close beside my heart.”

With these words the beautiful daughter of Rappaccini plucked one of the richest blossoms of the shrub, and was about to fasten it in her

bosom. But now, unless Giovanni's draughts of wine had bewildered his senses, a singular incident occurred. A small orange-colored reptile, of the lizard or chameleon species, chanced to be creeping along the path, just at the feet of Beatrice. It appeared to Giovanni,—but, at the distance from which he gazed, he could scarcely have seen anything so minute,—it appeared to him, however, that a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descended upon the lizard's head. For an instant the reptile contorted itself violently, and then lay motionless in the sunshine. Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon, and crossed herself, sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom. There it blushed, and almost glimmered with the dazzling effect of a precious stone, adding to her dress and aspect the one appropriate charm which nothing else in the world could have supplied. But Giovanni, out of the shadow of his window, bent forward and shrank back, and murmured and trembled.

"Am I awake? Have I my senses?" said he to himself. "What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?"

Beatrice now strayed carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath Giovanni's window, so that he was compelled to thrust his head quite out of its concealment in order to gratify the intense and painful curiosity which she excited. At this moment there came a beautiful insect over the garden wall; it had, perhaps, wandered through the city, and found no flowers or verdure among those antique haunts of men until the heavy perfumes of Dr. Rappaccini's shrubs had lured it from afar. Without alighting on the flowers, this winged brightness seemed to be attracted by Beatrice, and lingered in the air and fluttered about her head. Now, here it could not be but that Giovanni Guasconti's eyes deceived him. Be that as it might, he fancied that, while Beatrice was gazing at the insect with childish delight, it grew faint and fell at her feet; its bright wings shivered; it was dead—from no cause that he could discern, unless it were the atmosphere of her breath. Again Beatrice crossed herself and sighed heavily as she bent over the dead insect.

An impulsive movement of Giovanni drew her eyes to the window. There she beheld the beautiful head of the young man—rather a

Grecian than an Italian head, with fair, regular features, and a glistening of gold among his ringlets—gazing down upon her like a being that hovered in mid air. Scarcely knowing what he did, Giovanni threw down the bouquet which he had hitherto held in his hand.

"Signora," said he, "there are pure and healthful flowers. Wear them for the sake of Giovanni Guasconti."

"Thanks, signor," replied Beatrice, with her rich voice, that came forth as it were like a gush of music, and with a mirthful expression half childish and half woman-like. "I accept your gift, and would fain recompense it with this precious purple flower; but if I toss it into the air it will not reach you. So Signor Guasconti must even content himself with my thanks."

She lifted the bouquet from the ground, and then, as if inwardly ashamed at having stepped aside from her maidenly reserve to respond to a stranger's greeting, passed swiftly homeward through the garden. But few as the moments were, it seemed to Giovanni, when she was on the point of vanishing beneath the sculptured portal, that his beautiful bouquet was already beginning to wither in her grasp. It was an idle thought; there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance.

For many days after this incident the young man avoided the window that looked into Dr. Rappaccini's garden, as if something ugly and monstrous would have blasted his eyesight had he been betrayed into a glance. He felt conscious of having put himself, to a certain extent, within the influence of an unintelligible power by the communication which he had opened with Beatrice. The wisest course would have been, if his heart were in any real danger, to quit his lodgings and Padua itself at once; the next wiser, to have accustomed himself, as far as possible, to the familiar and daylight view of Beatrice—thus bringing her rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience. Least of all, while avoiding her sight, ought Giovanni to have remained so near this extraordinary being that the proximity and possibility even of intercourse should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing. Guasconti had not a deep heart—or, at all events, its depths were not sounded now; but he had a

quick fancy, and an ardent southern temperament, which rose every instant to a higher fever pitch. Whether or no Beatrice possessed those terrible attributes, that fatal breath, the affinity with those so beautiful and deadly flowers which were indicated by what Giovanni had witnessed, she had at least instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system. It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him; nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame; but a wild offspring of both love and horror that had each parent in it, and burned like one and shivered like the other. Giovanni knew not what to dread; still less did he know what to hope; yet hope and dread kept a continual warfare in his breast, alternately vanquishing one another and starting up afresh to renew the contest. Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions.

Sometimes he endeavored to assuage the fever of his spirit by a rapid walk through the streets of Padua or beyond its gates: his footsteps kept time with the throbbings of his brain, so that the walk was apt to accelerate itself to a race. One day he found himself arrested; his arm was seized by a portly personage, who had turned back on recognizing the young man and expended much breath in overtaking him.

"Signor Giovanni! Stay, my young friend!" cried he. "Have you forgotten me? That might well be the case if I were as much altered as yourself."

It was Baglioni, whom Giovanni had avoided ever since their first meeting, from a doubt that the professor's sagacity would look too deeply into his secrets. Endeavoring to recover himself, he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one and spoke like a man in a dream.

"Yes; I am Giovanni Guasconti. You are Professor Pietro Baglioni. Now let me pass!"

"Not yet, not yet, Signor Giovanni Guasconti," said the professor, smiling, but at the same time scrutinizing the youth with an earnest glance. "What! did I grow up side by side with your father? and shall his son pass me like a stranger in these old streets of Padua? Stand still, Signor Giovanni; for we must have a word or two before we part."

"Speedily, then, most worshipful professor,

speedily," said Giovanni, with feverish impatience. "Does not your worship see that I am in haste?"

Now, while he was speaking there came a man in black along the street, stooping and moving feebly like a person in inferior health. His face was all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet so pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect that an observer might easily have overlooked the merely physical attributes and have seen only this wonderful energy. As he passed, this person exchanged a cold and distant salutation with Baglioni, but fixed his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice. Nevertheless, there was a peculiar quietness in the look, as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man.

"It is Dr. Rappaccini!" whispered the professor when the stranger had passed. "Has he ever seen your face before?"

"Not that I know," answered Giovanni, starting at the name.

"He *has* seen you! he must have seen you!" said Baglioni hastily. "For some purpose or other, this man of science is making a study of you. I know that look of his! It is the same that coldly illuminates his face as he bends over a bird, a mouse, or a butterfly, which, in pursuance of some experiment, he has killed by the perfume of a flower; a look as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature's warmth of love. Signor Giovanni, I will stake my life upon it, you are the subject of one of Rappaccini's experiments!"

"Will you make a fool of me?" cried Giovanni passionately. "*That*, signor professor, were an untoward experiment."

"Patience! patience!" replied the imperturbable professor. "I tell thee, my poor Giovanni, that Rappaccini has a scientific interest in thee. Thou hast fallen into fearful hands! And the Signora Beatrice,—what part does she act in this mystery?"

But Guasconti, finding Baglioni's pertinacity intolerable, here broke away, and was gone before the professor could again seize his arm. He looked after the young man intently and shook his head.

"This must not be," said Baglioni to himself. "The youth is the son of my old friend, and shall not come to any harm from which the

arcana of medical science can preserve him. Besides, it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini, thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to. Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it!"

Meanwhile Giovanni had pursued a circuitous route, and at length found himself at the door of his lodgings. As he crossed the threshold he was met by old Lisabetta, who smirked and smiled, and was evidently desirous to attract his attention; vainly, however, as the ebullition of his feelings had momentarily subsided into a cold and dull vacuity. He turned his eyes full upon the withered face that was puckering itself into a smile, but seemed to behold it not. The old dame, therefore, laid her grasp upon his cloak.

"Signor! signor!" whispered she, still with a smile over the whole breadth of her visage, so that it looked not unlike a grotesque carving in wood, darkened by centuries. "Listen, signor! There is a private entrance into the garden!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed Giovanni, turning quickly about, as if an inanimate thing should start into feverish life. "A private entrance into Dr. Rappaccini's garden?"

"Hush! hush! not so loud!" whispered Lisabetta, putting her hand over his mouth. "Yes; into the worshipful doctor's garden, where you may see all his fine shrubbery. Many a young man in Padua would give gold to be admitted among those flowers."

Giovanni put a piece of gold into her hand. "Show me the way," said he.

A surmise, probably excited by his conversation with Baglioni, crossed his mind, that this interposition of old Lisabetta might perchance be connected with the intrigue, whatever were its nature, in which the professor seemed to suppose that Dr. Rappaccini was involving him. But such a suspicion, though it disturbed Giovanni, was inadequate to restrain him. The instant that he was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever-lessening circles, towards a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow; and yet, strange to say, there came across him a

sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory; whether it were really of so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now thrusting himself into an incalculable position; whether it were not merely the fantasy of a young man's brain, only slightly or not at all connected with his heart.

He paused, hesitated, turned half about, but again went on. His withered guide led him along several obscure passages, and finally undid a door, through which, as it was opened, there came the sight and sound of rustling leaves, with the broken sunshine slimmering among them. Giovanni stepped forth, and, forcing himself through the entanglement of a shrub that wreathed its tendrils over the hidden entrance, stood beneath his own window in the open area of Dr. Rappaccini's garden.

How often is it the case that, when impossibilities have come to pass and dreams have condensed their misty substance into tangible realities, we find ourselves calm, and even coldly self-possessed, amid circumstances which it would have been a delirium of joy or agony to anticipate! Fate delights to thwart us thus. Passion will choose his own time to rush upon the scene, and lingers sluggishly behind when an appropriate adjustment of events would seem to summon his appearance. So was it now with Giovanni. Day after day his pulses had throbbed with feverish blood at the improbable idea of an interview with Beatrice, and of standing with her, face to face, in this very garden, basking in the Oriental sunshine of her beauty, and snatching from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence. But now there was a singular and untimely equanimity within his breast. He threw a glance around the garden to discover if Beatrice or her father were present, and, perceiving that he was alone, began a critical observation of the plants.

The aspect of one and all of them dissatisfied him; their gorgeousness seemed fierce, passionate, and even unnatural. There was hardly an individual shrub which a wanderer, straying by himself through a forest, would not have been startled to find growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket. Several also would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness indicating that there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery, of various vegetable species, that the

production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. They were probably the result of experiment, which in one or two cases had succeeded in mingling plants individually lovely into a compound possessing the questionable and ominous character that distinguished the whole growth of the garden. In fine, Giovanni recognized but two or three plants in the collection, and those of a kind that he well knew to be poisonous. While busy with these contemplations he heard the rustling of a silken garment, and, turning, beheld Beatrice emerging from beneath the sculptured portal.

Giovanni had not considered with himself what should be his deportment; whether he should apologize for his intrusion into the garden, or assume that he was there with the privacy at least, if not by the desire, of Dr. Rappaccini or his daughter; but Beatrice's manner placed him at his ease, although leaving him still in doubt by what agency he had gained admittance. She came lightly along the path and met him near the broken fountain. There was surprise in her face, but brightened by a simple and kind expression of pleasure.

"You are a connoisseur in flowers, signor," said Beatrice, with a smile, alluding to the bouquet which he had flung her from the window. "It is no marvel, therefore, if the sight of my father's rare collection has tempted you to take a nearer view. If he were here, he could tell you many strange and interesting facts as to the nature and habits of these shrubs; for he has spent a lifetime in such studies, and this garden is his world."

"And yourself, lady," observed Giovanni, "if fame says true,—you likewise are deeply skilled in the virtues indicated by these rich blossoms and these spicy perfumes. Would you deign to be my instructress, I should prove an apter scholar than if taught by Signor Rappaccini himself."

"Are there such idle rumors?" asked Beatrice, with the music of a pleasant laugh. "Do people say that I am skilled in my father's science of plants? What a jest is there! No; though I have grown up among these flowers, I know no more of them than their hues and perfume; and sometimes methinks I would fain rid myself of even that small knowledge. There are many flowers

here, and those not the least brilliant, that shock and offend me when they meet my eye. But pray, signor, do not believe these stories about my science. Believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes."

"And must I believe all that I have seen with my own eyes?" asked Giovanni, pointedly, while the recollection of former scenes made him shrink. "No, signora; you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing save what comes from your own lips."

It would appear that Beatrice understood him. There came a deep flush to her cheek; but she looked full into Giovanni's eyes, and responded to his gaze of uneasy suspicion with a queenlike haughtiness.

"I do so bid you, signor," she replied. "Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence; but the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe."

A fervor glowed in her whole aspect and beamed upon Giovanni's consciousness like the light of truth itself; but while she spoke there was a fragrance in the atmosphere around her, rich and delightful, though evanescent, yet which the young man, from an indefinable reluctance, scarcely dared to draw into his lungs. It might be the odor of the flowers. Could it be Beatrice's breath which thus embalmed her words with a strange richness, as if by steeping them in her heart? A faintness passed like a shadow over Giovanni and flitted away; he seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear.

The tinge of passion that had colored Beatrice's manner vanished; she became gay, and appeared to derive a pure delight from her communion with the youth not unlike what the maiden of a lonely island might have felt conversing with a voyager from the civilized world. Evidently her experience of life had been confined within the limits of that garden. She talked now about matters as simple as the daylight or summer clouds, and now asked questions in reference to the city, or Giovanni's distant home, his friends, his mother, and his sisters—questions indicating such seclusion, and such lack of familiarity with modes and forms, that Giovanni responded as if to an infant. Her spirit gushed

out before him like a fresh rill that was just catching its first glimpse of the sunlight and wondering at the reflections of earth and sky which were flung into its bosom. There came thoughts, too, from a deep source, and fantasies of a gemlike brilliancy, as if diamonds and rubies sparkled upward among the bubbles of the fountain. Ever and anon there gleamed across the young man's mind a sense of wonder that he should be walking side by side with the being who had so wrought upon his imagination, whom he had idealized in such hues of terror, in whom he had positively witnessed such manifestations of dreadful attributes,—that he should be conversing with Beatrice like a brother, and should find her so human and so maidenlike. But such reflections were only momentary; the effect of her character was too real not to make itself familiar at once.

In this free intercourse they had strayed through the garden, and now, after many turns among its avenues, were come to the shattered fountain, beside which grew the magnificent shrub, with its treasury of glowing blossoms. A fragrance was diffused from it which Giovanni recognized as identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice's breath, but incomparably more powerful. As her eyes fell upon it, Giovanni beheld her press her hand to her bosom as if her heart were throbbing suddenly and painfully.

"For the first time in my life," murmured she, addressing the shrub, "I had forgotten thee."

"I remember, signora," said Giovanni, "that you once promised to reward me with one of these living gems for the bouquet which I had the happy boldness to fling to your feet. Permit me now to pluck it as a memorial of this interview."

He made a step towards the shrub with extended hand; but Beatrice darted forward, uttering a shriek that went through his heart like a dagger. She caught his hand and drew it back with the whole force of her slender figure. Giovanni felt her touch thrilling through his fibres.

"Touch it not!" exclaimed she, in a voice of agony. "Not for thy life! It is fatal!"

Then, hiding her face, she fled from him and vanished beneath the sculptured portal. As Giovanni followed her with his eyes, he beheld the emaciated figure and pale intelligence of Dr. Rappaccini, who had been watching the scene,

he knew not how long, within the shadow of the entrance.

No sooner was Guasconti alone in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back to his passionate musings, invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human; her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; she was worthiest to be worshipped; she was capable, surely, on her part, of the height and heroism of love. Those tokens which he had hitherto considered as proofs of a frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system were now either forgotten, or, by the subtle sophistry of passion transmitted into a golden crown of enchantment, rendering Beatrice the more admirable by so much as she was the more unique. Whatever had looked ugly was now beautiful; or, if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness. Thus did he spend the night, nor fell asleep until the dawn had begun to awake the slumbering flowers in Dr. Rappaccini's garden, whither Giovanni's dreams doubtless led him. Up rose the sun in his due season, and, flinging his beams upon the young man's eyelids, awoke him to a sense of pain. When thoroughly aroused, he became sensible of a burning and tingling agony in his hand—in his right hand—the very hand which Beatrice had grasped in her own when he was on the point of plucking one of the gemlike flowers. On the back of that hand there was now a purple print like that of four small fingers, and the likeness of a slender thumb upon his wrist.

Oh, how stubbornly does love,—or even that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but strikes no depth of root into the heart,—how stubbornly does it hold its faith until the moment comes when it is doomed to vanish into thin mist! Giovanni wrapped a handkerchief about his hand and wondered what evil thing had stung him, and soon forgot his pain in a reverie of Beatrice.

After the first interview, a second was in the inevitable course of what we call fate. A third; a fourth; and a meeting with Beatrice in the garden was no longer an incident in Giovanni's daily life, but the whole space in which he might

be said to live; for the anticipation and memory of that ecstatic hour made up the remainder. Nor was it otherwise with the daughter of Rappaccini. She watched for the youth's appearance, and flew to his side with confidence as unreserved as if they had been playmates from early infancy—as if they were such playmates still. If, by any unwonted chance, he failed to come at the appointed moment, she stood beneath the window and sent up the rich sweetness of her tones to float around him in his chamber and echo and reverberate throughout his heart: "Giovanni! Giovanni! Why tarriest thou? Come down!" And down he hastened into that Eden of poisonous flowers.

But, with all this intimate familiarity, there was still a reserve in Beatrice's demeanor, so rigidly and invariably sustained that the idea of infringing it scarcely occurred to his imagination. By all appreciable signs, they loved; they had looked love with eyes that conveyed the holy secret from the depths of one soul into the depths of the other, as if it were too sacred to be whispered by the way; they had even spoken love in those gushes of passion when their spirits darted forth in articulated breath like tongues of long-hidden flame; and yet there had been no seal of lips, no clasp of hands, nor any slightest caress such as love claims and hallows. He had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her hair; her garment—so marked was the physical barrier between them—had never been waved against him by a breeze. On the few occasions when Giovanni had seemed tempted to overstep the limit, Beatrice grew so sad, so stern, and withal wore such a look of desolate separation, shuddering at itself, that not a spoken word was requisite to repel him. At such times he was startled at the horrible suspicions that rose, monster-like, out of the caverns of his heart and stared him in the face; his love grew thin and faint as the morning mist; his doubts alone had substance. But, when Beatrice's face brightened again after the momentary shadow, she was transformed at once from the mysterious, questionable being whom he had watched with so much awe and horror; she was now the beautiful and unsophisticated girl whom he felt that his spirit knew with a certainty beyond all other knowledge.

A considerable time had now passed since Giovanni's last meeting with Baglioni. One morning, however, he was disagreeably surprised

by a visit from the professor, whom he had scarcely thought of for whole weeks, and would willingly have forgotten still longer. Given up as he had long been to a pervading excitement, he could tolerate no companions except upon condition of their perfect sympathy with his present state of feeling. Such sympathy was not to be expected from Professor Baglioni.

The visitor chatted carelessly for a few moments about the gossip of the city and the university, and then took up another topic.

"I have been reading an old classic author lately," he said, "and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince, who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn and gorgeous as the sunset; but what especially distinguished her was a certain rich perfume in her breath—richer than a garden of Persian roses. Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger; but a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her."

"And what was that?" asked Giovanni, turning his eyes downward to avoid those of the professor.

"That this lovely woman," continued Baglioni, with emphasis, "had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life. With that rich perfume of her breath she blasted the very air. Her love would have been poison—her embrace death. Is not this a marvellous tale?"

"A childish fable," answered Giovanni, nervously starting from his chair. "I marvel how your worship finds time to read such nonsense among your graver studies."

"By the by," said the professor, looking uneasily about him, "what singular fragrance is this in your apartment? Is it the perfume of your gloves? It is faint, but delicious; and yet, after all, by no means agreeable. Were I to breathe it long, methinks it would make me ill. It is like the breath of a flower; but I see no flowers in the chamber."

"Nor are there any," replied Giovanni, who had turned pale as the professor spoke; "nor, I think, is there any fragrance except in your wor-

ship's imagination. Odors, being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume, the bare idea of it, may easily be mistaken for a present reality."

"Ay; but my sober imagination does not often play such tricks," said Baglioni; "and, were I to fancy any kind of odor, it would be that of some vile apothecary drug, wherewith my fingers are likely enough to be imbued. Our worshipful friend Rappaccini, as I have heard, tinctures his medicaments with odors richer than those of Araby. Doubtless, likewise, the fair and learned Signora Beatrice would minister to her patients with draughts as sweet as a maiden's breath; but woe to him that sips them!"

Giovanni's face evinced many contending emotions. The tone in which the professor alluded to the pure and lovely daughter of Rappaccini was a torture to his soul; and yet the intimation of a view of her character, opposite to his own, gave instantaneous distinctness to a thousand dim suspicions, which now grinned at him like so many demons. But he strove hard to quell them and to respond to Baglioni with a true lover's perfect faith.

"Signor professor," said he, "you were my father's friend; perchance, too, it is your purpose to act a friendly part towards his son. I would fain feel nothing towards you save respect and deference; but I pray you to observe, signor, that there is one subject on which we must not speak. You know not the Signora Beatrice. You cannot, therefore, estimate the wrong—the blasphemy, I may even say—that is offered to her character by a light or injurious word."

"Giovanni! my poor Giovanni!" answered the professor, with a calm expression of pity, "I know this wretched girl far better than yourself. You shall hear the truth in respect to the prisoner Rappaccini and his poisonous daughter; yes, poisonous as she is beautiful. Listen; for, even should you do violence to my gray hairs, it shall not silence me. That old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth by the deep and deadly science of Rappaccini and in the person of the lovely Beatrice."

Giovanni groaned and hid his face.

"Her father," continued Baglioni, "was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child in this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal for science; for, let us do him

justice, he is as true a man of science as ever distilled his own heart in an alembic. What, then, will be your fate? Beyond a doubt you are selected as the material of some new experiment. Perhaps the result is to be death; perhaps a fate more awful still. Rappaccini, with what he calls the interest of science before his eyes, will hesitate at nothing."

"It is a dream," muttered Giovanni to himself; "surely it is a dream."

"But," resumed the professor, "be of good cheer, son of my friend. It is not yet too late for the rescue. Possibly we may even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature, from which her father's madness has estranged her. Behold this little silver vase! It was wrought by the hands of the renowned Benvenuto Cellini, and is well worthy to be a love gift to the fairest dame in Italy. But its contents are invaluable. One little sip of this antidote would have rendered the most virulent poisons of the Borgias innocuous. Doubt not that it will be as efficacious against those of Rappaccini. Bestow the vase, and the precious liquid within it, on your Beatrice, and hopefully await the result."

Baglioni laid a small, exquisitely wrought silver vial on the table and withdrew, leaving what he had said to produce its effect upon the young man's mind.

"We will thwart Rappaccini yet," thought he, chuckling to himself, as he descended the stairs; "but, let us confess the truth of him, he is a wonderful man—a wonderful man indeed; a vile empiric, however, in his practice, and therefore not to be tolerated by those who respect the good old rules of the medical profession."

Throughout Giovanni's whole acquaintance with Beatrice, he had occasionally, as we have said, been haunted by dark surmises as to her character; yet so thoroughly had she made herself felt by him as a simple, natural, most affectionate, and guileless creature, that the image now held up by Professor Baglioni looked as strange and incredible as if it were not in accordance with his own original conception. True, there were ugly recollections connected with his first glimpses of the beautiful girl; he could not quite forget the bouquet that withered in her grasp, and the insect that perished amid the sunny air, by no ostensible agency save the fragrance of her breath. These incidents, however,

dissolving in the pure light of her character, had no longer the efficacy of facts, but were acknowledged as mistaken fantasies, by whatever testimony of the senses they might appear to be substantiated. There is something truer and more real than what we can see with the eyes and touch with the finger. On such better evidence had Giovanni founded his confidence in Beatrice, though rather by the necessary force of her high attributes than by any deep and generous faith on his part. But now his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down, grovelling among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image. Not that he gave her up; he did but distrust. He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satisfy him, once for all, whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul. His eyes, gazing down afar, might have deceived him as to the lizard, the insect, and the flowers; but if he could witness, at the distance of a few paces, the sudden blight of one fresh and healthful flower in Beatrice's hand, there would be room for no further question. With this idea he hastened to the florist's and purchased a bouquet that was still gemmed with the morning dew-drops.

It was now the customary hour of his daily interview with Beatrice. Before descending into the garden, Giovanni failed not to look at his figure in the mirror,—a vanity to be expected in a beautiful young man, yet, as displaying itself at that troubled and feverish moment, the token of a certain shallowness of feeling and insincerity of character. He did gaze, however, and said to himself that his features had never before possessed so rich a grace, nor his eyes such vivacity, nor his cheeks so warm a hue of superabundant life.

"At least," thought he, "her poison has not yet insinuated itself into my system. I am no flower to perish in her grasp."

With that thought he turned his eyes on the bouquet, which he had never once laid aside from his hand. A thrill of indefinable horror shot through his frame on perceiving that those dewy flowers were already beginning to droop; they wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday. Giovanni grew white as

marble, and stood motionless before the mirror, staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful. He remembered Baglioni's remark about the fragrance that seemed to pervade the chamber. It must have been the poison in his breath! Then he shuddered—shuddered at himself. Recovering from his stupor, he began to watch with curious eye a spider that was busily at work hanging its web crossing and recrossing the artful system of interwoven lines—as vigorous and active a spider as ever dangled from an old ceiling. Giovanni bent towards the insect, and emitted a deep, long breath. The spider suddenly ceased its toil; the web vibrated with a tremor originating in the body of the small artisan. Again Giovanni sent forth a breath, deeper, longer, and imbued with a venomous feeling out of his heart: he knew not whether he were wicked, or only desperate. The spider made a convulsive gripe with his limbs and hung dead across the window.

"Accursed! accursed!" muttered Giovanni, addressing himself. "Hast thou grown so poisonous that this deadly insect perishes by thy breath?"

At that moment a rich, sweet voice came floating up from the garden.

"Giovanni! Giovanni! It is past the hour! Why tarriest thou? Come down!"

"Yes," muttered Giovanni again. "She is the only being whom my breath may not slay! Would that it might!"

He rushed down, and in an instant was standing before the bright and loving eyes of Beatrice. A moment ago his wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance; but with her actual presence there came influences which had too real an existence to be at once shaken off: recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollections of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. Incapable as he was of such high faith, still her presence had not

utterly lost its magic. Giovanni's rage was quelled into an aspect of sullen insensibility. Beatrice, with a quick spiritual sense, immediately felt that there was a gulf of blackness between them which neither he nor she could pass. They walked on together, sad and silent, and came thus to the marble fountain and to its pool of water on the ground, in the midst of which grew the shrub that bore gemlike blossoms. Giovanni was affrighted at the eager enjoyment—the appetite, as it were—with which he found himself inhaling the fragrance of the flowers.

"Beatrice," asked he, abruptly, "whence came this shrub?"

"My father created it," answered she, with simplicity.

"Created it! created it!" repeated Giovanni. "What mean you, Beatrice?"

"He is a man fearfully acquainted with the secrets of Nature," replied Beatrice; "and, at the hour when I first drew breath, this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child. Approach it not!" continued she, observing with terror that Giovanni was drawing nearer to the shrub. "It has qualities that you little dream of. But I, dearest Giovanni,—I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister, and I loved it with a human affection; for, alas!—hast thou not suspected it?—there was an awful doom."

Here Giovanni frowned so darkly upon her that Beatrice paused and trembled. But her faith in his tenderness reassured her, and made her blush that she had doubted for an instant.

"There was an awful doom," she continued, "the effect of my father's fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society of my kind. Until Heaven sent thee, dearest Giovanni, oh, how lonely was thy poor Beatrice!"

"Was it a hard doom?" asked Giovanni, fixing his eyes upon her.

"Only of late have I known how hard it was," answered she, tenderly. "Oh, yes; but my heart was torpid, and therefore quiet."

Giovanni's rage broke forth from his sullen gloom like a lightning flash out of a dark cloud.

"Accursed one!" cried he, with venomous scorn and anger. "And, finding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me likewise from all the warmth of life and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror!"

"Giovanni!" exclaimed Beatrice, turning her large bright eyes upon his face. The force of his words had not found its way into her mind; she was merely thunderstruck.

"Yes, poisonous thing!" repeated Giovanni, beside himself with passion. "Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature as thyself—a world's wonder of hideous monstrosity! Now, if our breath be happily as fatal to ourselves as to all others, let us join our lips in one kiss of unutterable hatred, and so die!"

"What has befallen me?" murmured Beatrice, with a low moan out of her heart. "Holy Virgin, pity me, a poor heartbroken child!"

"Thou,—dost thou pray?" cried Giovanni, still with the same fiendish scorn. "Thy very prayers, as they come from thy lips, taint the atmosphere with death. Yes, yes; let us pray! Let us to church and dip our fingers in the holy water at the portal! They that come after us will perish as by a pestilence! Let us sign crosses in the air! It will be scattering curses abroad in the likeness of holy symbols!"

"Giovanni," said Beatrice, calmly, for her grief was beyond passion, "why dost thou join thyself with me thus in those terrible words? I, it is true, am the horrible thing thou namest me. But thou,—what hast thou to do, save with one other shudder at my hideous misery to go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race, and forget that there ever crawled on earth such a monster as poor Beatrice?"

"Dost thou pretend ignorance?" asked Giovanni, scowling upon her. "Behold! this power have I gained from the pure daughter of Rappaccini."

There was a swarm of summer insects flitting through the air in search of the food promised by the flower odors of the fatal garden. They circled round Giovanni's head, and were evidently attracted towards him by the same influence which had drawn them for an instant within the sphere of several of the shrubs. He sent forth a breath among them, and smiled bitterly at Beatrice as at least a score of the insects fell dead upon the ground.

"I see it! I see it!" shrieked Beatrice. "It is my father's fatal science! No, no, Giovanni; it was not I! Never! never! I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so to let thee

pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart; for, Giovanni, believe it, though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God's creature, and craves love as its daily food. But my father,—he has united us in this fearful sympathy. Yes; spurn me, tread upon me, kill me! Oh, what is death after such words as thine? But it was not I. Not for a world of bliss would I have done it."

Giovanni's passion had exhausted itself in its outburst from his lips. There now came across him a sense, mournful, and not without tenderness, of the intimate and peculiar relationship between Beatrice and himself. They stood, as it were, in an utter solitude, which would be made none the less solitary by the densest throng of human life. Ought not, then, the desert of humanity around them to press this insulated pair closer together? If they should be cruel to one another, who was there to be kind to them? Besides, thought Giovanni, might there not still be a hope of his returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice, the redeemed Beatrice, by the hand? O, weak, and selfish, and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible, after such deep love had been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice's love by Giovanni's blighting words! No, no; there could be no such hope. She must pass heavily, with that broken heart, across the borders of Time—she must bathe her hurts in some fount of paradise, and forget her grief in the light of immortality, and *there* be well.

But Giovanni did not know it.

"Dear Beatrice," said he, approaching her, while she shrank away as always at his approach, but now with a different impulse, "dearest Beatrice, our fate is not yet so desperate. Behold! there is a medicine, potent, as a wise physician has assured me, and almost divine in its efficacy. It is composed of ingredients the most opposite to those by which thy awful father has brought this calamity upon thee and me. It is distilled of blessed herbs. Shall we not quaff it together, and thus be purified from evil?"

"Give it me!" said Beatrice, extending her hand to receive the little silver vial which Giovanni took from his bosom. She added, with a peculiar emphasis, "I will drink; but do thou await the result."

She put Baglioni's antidote to her lips; and, at the same moment, the figure of Rappaccini

emerged from the portal and came slowly towards the marble fountain. As he drew near, the pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary and finally be satisfied with his success. He paused; his bent form grew erect with conscious power; he spread out his hands over them in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children; but those were the same hands that had thrown poison into the stream of their lives. Giovanni trembled. Beatrice shuddered nervously, and pressed her hand upon her heart.

"My daughter," said Rappaccini, "thou art no longer lonely in the world. Pluck one of those precious gems from thy sister shrub and bid thy bridegroom wear it in his bosom. It will not harm him now. My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world, most dear to one another and dreadful to all besides!"

"My father," said Beatrice, feebly,—and still as she spoke she kept her hand upon her heart,— "wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon thy child?"

"Miserable!" exclaimed Rappaccini. "What mean you, foolish girl? Dost thou deem it misery to be endowed with marvellous gifts against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy—misery, to be able to quell the mightiest with a breath—misery, to be as terrible as thou art beautiful? Wouldst thou, then, have preferred the condition of a weak woman, exposed to all evil and capable of none?"

"I would fain have been loved, not feared," murmured Beatrice, sinking down upon the ground. "But now it matters not. I am going, father, where the evil which thou hast striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream—like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart; but they, too, will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?"

To Beatrice,—so radically had her earthly part been wrought upon by Rappaccini's skill,—as

poison had been life, so the powerful antidote was death; and thus the poor victim of man's ingenuity and of thwarted nature, and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom, perished there, at the feet of her father and Giovanni. Just at that moment Professor Pietro Baglioni looked forth from the window, and called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunderstricken man of science.

"Rappaccini! Rappaccini! and is *this* the up-shot of your experiment!"

ETHAN BRAND

(1850)

The theme of this story is suggested in two hints for stories which Hawthorne in 1844 recorded in *The American Notebooks*: "The search of an investigator for the Unpardonable Sin;—he at last finds it in his own heart and practice." "The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity,—content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart?" "Ethan Brand" was published in the *Boston Museum* for January 5, 1850; in the *Dollar Magazine* for May of the same year; and in *The Snow-Image and Other Tales* in 1851. Ethan Brand is in no sense a satiric characterization of Herman Melville, as Lewis Mumford suggested in his biography of that writer. The story was written and published before Hawthorne met Melville. For Melville's comments on it, see his second letter to Hawthorne given elsewhere in this volume.

Bartram the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hill-side below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

"Father, what is that?" asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

"Oh, some drunken man, I suppose," answered the lime-burner; "some merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh

loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock."

"But, father," said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, "he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!"

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried his father, gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him."

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountain-side, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads, and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hill-side, it resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild-flowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be over-spread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his

daily and night-long fire, affords points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when, again, the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a fitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hill-side, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

"Halloo! who is it?" cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. "Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!"

"You offer me a rough welcome," said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. "Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside."

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote

full upon the stranger's face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it.

"Good evening, stranger," said the lime-burner; "whence come you, so late in the day?"

"I come from my search," answered the wayfarer; "for, at last, it is finished."

"Drunk!—or crazy!" muttered Bartram to himself. "I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better."

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner's dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all.

"Your task draws to an end, I see," said he. "This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime."

"Why, who are you?" exclaimed the lime-burner. "You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself."

"And well I may be," said the stranger; "for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a new-comer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?"

"The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?" asked Bartram, with a laugh.

"The same," answered the stranger. "He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again."

"What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?" cried the lime-burner, in amazement. "I am a

new-comer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

"Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

"Here!" replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

"Joe," said he to his little son, "scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin!"

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and him-

self, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence, that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot, from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind

me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected this strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!"

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!"

"The man's head is turned," muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman too."

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and

mingling all their voices together in uncere-
monious talk, they now burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of firelight that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, brown, bob-tailed coat, with brass buttons, who, for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered, though strangely altered, face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—

fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng, too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin, and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

"Leave me," he said bitterly, "ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!"

"Why, you uncivil scoundrel," cried the fierce doctor, "is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!"

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travelers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers, and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horseback in the ring, or performed marvellous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

"They tell me you have been all over the earth," said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?"

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

"Yes," murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer, "it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!"

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was

other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, traveling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

"Come, old Dutchman," cried one of the young men, "let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!"

"Oh yes, Captain," answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain,—"I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!"

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

"You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage from his stooping posture. "But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

"I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain."

"Peace," answered Ethan Brand, sternly, "or get thee into the furnace yonder!"

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and, by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping,—as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally un-

able to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hill-side was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised, them to retire to rest.

"For myself, I cannot sleep," said he. "I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time."

"And call the Devil out of the furnace to keep you company, I suppose," muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. "But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joe!"

As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirits of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but marvelous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature

had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

"What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?" said Ethan Brand to himself. "My task is done, and well done!"

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

"O Mother Earth," cried he, "who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar frame! Embrace me, as I do thee!"

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

"Up, boy, up!" cried the lime-burner, starting about him. "Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a

twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!"

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops, and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a foreglimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weathercocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while Echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!"

"Yes," growled the lime-burner, with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!"

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the

ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.

"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

HERMAN MELVILLE

1819 - 1891

... if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honor and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.

—HERMAN MELVILLE, *Moby-Dick*, Chapter XXIV.

Melville, whom his English biographer, John Freeman, has called "the most powerful of all the great American writers," was born, ten years after Poe, in New York City on August 1, 1819. In the same year were born Queen Victoria, George Eliot, John Ruskin, Lowell, and Walt Whitman. One may read much in Melville, Lowell, and Whitman without learning that they were aware of one another's existence. Melville belonged to a well-to-do family; but his father failed in business in 1830 and died two years later, leaving wife and children, then living in Albany, in straitened circumstances. Melville, instead of going to college, clerked in a store and worked in a bank. In 1837 he shipped as cabin boy on a ship bound for Liverpool. In *Redburn* (1849) he gives some account of his first voyage. The period from his return to New York until January, 1841, is obscure. A part of the time was spent in teaching, which he seems to have disliked. If *Moby-Dick* is to be taken literally, going to sea was Melville's "substitute for pistol and ball." Again he says: "I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts." Whatever the reason, Melville shipped on the whaler *Acushnet*, bound for the Pacific Ocean. He was away nearly four years, returning in October, 1844.

These four years gave Melville the material for his best-known books. *Typee* (1846) describes

his desertion from the *Acushnet* and his stay of four months among the happy savages in the Marquesas Islands. *Omoo* (1847) deals with a sojourn in Tahiti. *White-Jacket* (1850) describes his experiences on the frigate *United States*, on which he returned from Honolulu. *Mardi* (1849) and *Moby-Dick* (1851) also deal with life in the Pacific, but they are obviously less autobiographical. Charles R. Anderson's *With Melville in the South Seas*, which brings to light new evidence, indicates that Melville's books are more fiction and less autobiography than had been supposed. Other American writers knew the sea, but Melville was the literary discoverer of the South Seas. So far as raw materials were concerned, he came home supplied with matter as new and striking as that of Cooper's frontier romances had seemed a few years before.

For a time his books had a considerable vogue. He was attacked, however, for indiscreet accounts of missionaries and for suggestions that the primitive peoples suffered far more than they gained from contact with the whites. Meanwhile in 1847 Melville had married a daughter of Chief Justice Shaw, of Massachusetts, and was finding it difficult to support his family by his pen. He tried writing for the magazines; he tried to write novels that would be widely read; he tried lecturing; he tried to secure a consular appointment. Poor health added to his difficulties. Finally, in 1866 he became an inspector in the New York Customs House. This position he held until 1886. Meanwhile he had largely given up writing except for verse. During his last years, however, he wrote one of his best stories, *Billy Budd*, which was not published until 1924.

Melville is not altogether the discovery of the twentieth century that he is supposed to be. He has, however, had his greatest vogue in our time. The twentieth century found his pessimism not uncongenial and relished his attacks upon aspects of American life and thought which he disliked. Modern critics and biographers, however, have read into Melville perhaps more than is actually there. They have read his books, particularly *Pierre* (1852), in the light of the Freudian psychology, of which Melville of course knew nothing. And yet, even if some contemporary critics have overrated Melville, it would seem clear now that *Moby-Dick*, his masterpiece, belongs among the great American novels, along with *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

The only important American writer with whom Melville's relations were ever close was Nathaniel Hawthorne. In October, 1850, Melville settled with his family at Arrowhead farm near Pittsfield, Mass. Hawthorne was then living at Lenox, which was not far off. In a letter to her mother Mrs. Hawthorne gave her impressions of Melville:

"I am not quite sure that *I do not think him* a very great man. . . . A man with a true, warm heart, and a soul and an intellect,—with life to his finger-tips; earnest, sincere and reverent; very tender and *modest*. . . . He has very keen perceptive power; but what astonishes me is, that his eyes are not large and deep. He seems to see everything very accurately; and how he can do so with his small eyes, I cannot tell. They are not keen eyes, either, but quite undistinguished in any way. His nose is straight and rather handsome, his mouth expressive of sensibility and emotion. He is tall, and erect, with an air free, brave and manly. When conversing, he is full of gesture and force, and loses himself in his subject. There is no grace nor polish. Once in a while, his animation gives place to a singularly quiet expression, out of these eyes to which I have objected; an indrawn, dim look, but which

at the same time makes you feel that he is at that moment taking deepest note of what is before him. It is a strange, lazy glance, but with a power in it quite unique. It does not seem to penetrate through you, but to take you into itself."

Hawthorne's letters to Melville, unfortunately, seem to have been lost or destroyed. Melville's letters to Hawthorne, two of which are given here, indicate that he expected more from his new friend than he was likely to get from any one. At the time Melville was going through the ordeal of writing *Moby-Dick*, tortured by philosophic and religious questions, and worried by his failure to make money by his pen. On August 29, 1850, Hawthorne wrote to E. A. Duyckinck: "'Mardi' is a rich book, with depths here and there that compel a man to swim for his life. It is so good that one scarcely pardons the writer for not having brooded long over it so as to make it a great deal better." Concerning *Moby-Dick*, which Melville had dedicated to him, he wrote to Duyckinck, December 1, 1851: "What a book Melville has written! It gives me an idea of much greater power than his preceding ones." Hawthorne saw Melville again in 1856 in Liverpool, as he tells us in his journal:

"... Melville has not been well, of late; he has been affected with neuralgic complaints, and no doubt has suffered from too constant literary occupation, pursued without much success latterly; and his writings, for a long while past, have indicated a morbid state of mind. So he left his place in Pittsfield, and has come to the Old World. He informed me that he had 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated'; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation, and I think will never rest until he gets hold of some definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand-hills amidst which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us."

The standard edition of Melville's works was published by Constable and Company in 1922-1924. The first volume of a new edition under the general editorship of Howard Vincent appeared in 1947. In 1949 Vincent published *The Trying-out of Moby-Dick*. Several of the novels are available in inexpensive editions. Raymond Weaver's *Herman Melville: Mariner and Mystic* (1921) and Lewis Mumford's *Herman Melville* (1929) are the best biographies, but neither is wholly satisfactory. John Freeman's biography (1926) in the English Men of Letters Series contains some excellent criticism. Two important studies are Charles R. Anderson's *Melville in the South Seas* (1939)—the best book yet written on Melville—and F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941). Willard Thorp's *Herman Melville: Representative Selections* (1938) has a useful bibliography, a good introductory essay, and some Melville letters not to be found elsewhere. See also Thorp's chapter in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). Two important studies of Melville's thought are: William Braswell, *Melville's Religious Thought* (1943), and William Ellery Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (1944). There are more recent studies by Geoffrey Stone (1949) and Richard Chase (1949). For further references, see Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

LETTERS*

TO NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

PITTSFIELD [MASS.], June 29, 1851.

MY DEAR HAWTHORNE,—The clear air and open window invite me to write to you. For some time past I have been so busy with a thousand things that I have almost forgotten when I wrote you last, and whether I received an answer. This most persuasive season has now for weeks recalled me from certain crotchety and over-doleful chimeras, the like of which men like you and me, and some others, forming a chain of God's posts round the world, must be content to encounter now and then, and fight them the best way we can. But come they will,—for in the boundless, trackless, but still glorious wild wilderness through which these outposts run, the Indians do sorely abound, as well as the insignificant but still stinging mosquitoes. Since you have been here, I have been building some shanties of houses (connected with the old one) and likewise some shanties of chapters and essays. I have been ploughing and sowing and raising and printing and praying, and now begin to come out upon a less bristling time, and to enjoy the calm prospect of things from a fair piazza at the north of the old farmhouse here.

Not entirely yet, though, am I without something to be urgent with. The "Whale" is only half through the press; for, wearied with the long delays of the printers, and disgusted with the heat and dust of the Babylonish brick-kiln of New York, I came back to the country to feel the grass, and end the book reclining on it, if I may. I am sure you will pardon this speaking all about myself; for if I say so much on that head, be sure all the rest of the world are thinking about themselves ten times as much. Let us speak, though we show all our faults and weaknesses,—for it is a sign of strength to be weak, to know it, and out with it; not in set way and ostentatiously, though, but incidentally and with premeditation. But I am falling into my old foible,—preaching. I am busy, but shall not be very long. Come and spend a day here, if you can and want to; if not, stay in Lenox, and

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God give you long life. When I am quite free of my present engagements, I am going to treat myself to a ride and a visit to you. Have ready a bottle of brandy, because I always feel like drinking that heroic drink when we talk ontological heroics together. This is rather a crazy letter in some respects, I apprehend. If so, ascribe it to the intoxicating effects of the latter end of June operating upon a very susceptible and peradventure feeble temperament. Shall I send you a fin of the "Whale" by way of a specimen mouthful? The tail is not yet cooked, though the hell-fire in which the whole book is broiled might not unreasonably have cooked it ere this. This is the book's motto (the secret one), *Ego non baptizo te in nomine*¹—but make out the rest yourself.

H. M.

TO NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

[1851]

MY DEAR HAWTHORNE,—I should have been rumbling down to you in my pine-board chariot a long time ago, were it not that for some weeks past I have been more busy than you can well imagine,—out of doors,—building and patching and tinkering away in all directions. Besides, I had my crops to get in,—corn and potatoes (I hope to show you some famous ones by and by),—and many other things to attend to, all accumulating upon this one particular season. I work myself; and at night my bodily sensations are akin to those I have so often felt before, when a hired man, doing my day's work from sun to sun. But I mean to continue visiting you until you tell me that my visits are both supererogatory and superfluous. With no son of man do I stand upon any etiquette or ceremony, except the Christian ones of charity and honesty. I am told, my fellow-man, that there is an aristocracy of the brain. Some men have boldly advocated and asserted it. Schiller seems to have done so, though I don't know much about him. At any rate, it is true that there have been those who, while earnest in behalf of political equality, still accept the intellectual estates. And I can well perceive, I think, how a man of superior mind can, by its intense cultivation, bring himself, as it were, into a certain spontaneous aristocracy of feeling,—exceedingly nice and fas-

¹ "I do not baptize thee in the name of ———."

tidious,—similar to that which, in an English Howard, conveys a torpedo-fish thrill at the slightest contact with a social plebeian. So, when you see or hear of my ruthless democracy on all sides, you may possibly feel a touch of a shrink, or something of that sort. It is but nature to be shy of a mortal who boldly declares that a thief in jail is as honorable a personage as Gen. George Washington. This is ludicrous. But Truth is the silliest thing under the sun. Try to get a living by the Truth—and go to the Soup Societies. Heavens! Let any clergyman try to preach the Truth from its very stronghold, the pulpit, and they would ride him out of his church on his own pulpit bannister. It can hardly be doubted that all Reformers are bottomed upon the truth, more or less; and to the world at large are not reformers almost universally laughing-stocks? Why so? Truth is ridiculous to men. Thus easily in my room here do I, conceited and garrulous, revere the test of my Lord Shaftesbury.

It seems an inconsistency to assert unconditional democracy in all things, and yet confess a dislike to all mankind—in the mass. But not so.—But it's an endless sermon,—and no more of it. I began by saying that the reason I have not been to Lenox is this,—in the evening I feel completely done up, as the phrase is, and incapable of the long jolting to get to your house and back. In a week or so, I go to New York, to bury myself in a third-story room, and work and slave on my "Whale" while it is driving through the press. *That* is the only way I can finish it now,—I am so pulled hither and thither by circumstances. The calm, the coolness, the silent grass-growing mood in which a man *ought* always to compose,—that, I fear, can seldom be mine. Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. My dear Sir, a presentiment is on me,—I shall at last be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg. What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches. I'm rather sore, perhaps, in this letter; but see my hand!—four blisters on this palm, made by hoes and hammers within the last few days. It is a rainy morning; so I am indoors, and all work suspended. I feel

cheerfully disposed, and therefore I write a little bluely. Would the Gin were here! If ever, my dear Hawthorne, in the eternal times that are to come, you and I shall sit down in Paradise, in some little shady corner by ourselves; and if we shall by any means be able to smuggle a basket of champagne there (I won't believe in a Temperance Heaven), and if we shall then cross our celestial legs in the celestial grass that is forever tropical, and strike our glasses and our heads together, till both musically ring in concert,—then, O my dear fellow-mortal, how shall we pleasantly discourse of all the things manifold which now so distress us,—when all the earth shall be but a reminiscence, yea, its final dissolution an antiquity. Then shall songs be composed as when wars are over; humorous, comic songs,—“Oh, when I lived in that queer little hole called the world,” or, “Oh, when I toiled and sweated below,” or, “Oh, when I knocked and was knocked in the fight”—yes, let us look forward to such things. Let us swear that, though now we sweat, yet it is because of the dry heat which is indispensable to the nourishment of the vine which is to bear the grapes that are to give us the champagne hereafter.

But I was talking of the “Whale.” As the fishermen say, “he's in his flurry,” when I left him some three weeks ago. I'm going to take him by the jaw, however, before long, and finish him up in some fashion or other. What's the use of elaborating what, in its very essence, is so short-lived as a modern book? Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I should die in the gutter.—I talk all about myself, and this is selfishness and egotism. Granted. But how help it? I am writing to you; I know little about you, but something about myself. So I write about myself,—at least, to you. Don't trouble yourself, though, about writing; and don't trouble yourself about visiting; and when you *do* visit, don't trouble yourself about talking. I will do all the writing and visiting and talking myself.—By the way, in the last “Dollar Magazine” I read “The Unpardonable Sin.”² He was a sad fellow, that

² Melville's comments on “Ethan Brand” are difficult to reconcile with Lewis Mumford's contention that Ethan was drawn from Melville and that the publication of the story occasioned a coolness between Melville and Hawthorne. The story actually was published before the two writers ever met.

Ethan Brand. I have no doubt you are by this time responsible for many a shake and tremor of the tribe of "general readers." It is a frightful poetical creed that the cultivation of the brain eats out the heart. But it's my *prose* opinion that in most cases, in those men who have fine brains and work them well, the heart extends down to hams. And though you smoke them with the fire of tribulation, yet, like veritable hams, the head only gives the richer and better flavor. I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head! I had rather be a fool with a heart, than Jupiter Olympus with his head. The reason the mass of men fear God, and *at bottom dislike* Him, is because they rather distrust His Heart, and fancy Him all Brain like a watch. (You perceive I employ a capital initial in the pronoun referring to the Deity; don't you think there is a slight dash of flunkeyism in that usage?) Another thing. I was in New York for four-and-twenty hours the other day, and saw a portrait of N. H. And I have seen and heard many flattering (in a publisher's point of view) allusions to the "Seven Gables." And I have seen "Tales," and "A New Volume" announced, by N. H. So upon the whole, I say to myself, this N. H. is in the ascendant. My dear Sir, they begin to patronize. All Fame is patronage. Let me be infamous: there is no patronage in *that*. What "reputation" H. M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a "man who lived among the cannibals"! When I speak of posterity, in reference to myself, I only mean the babies who will probably be born in the moment immediately ensuing upon my giving up the ghost. I shall go down to some of them, in all likelihood. "Typee" will be given to them, perhaps, with their gingerbread. I have come to regard this matter of Fame as the most transparent of all vanities. I read Solomon more and more, and every time see deeper and deeper and unspeakable meanings in him. I did not think of Fame, a year ago, as I do now. My development has been all within a few years past. I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould. So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. Three weeks have

scarcely passed, at any time between then and now, that I have not unfolded within myself. But I feel that I am now come to the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould. It seems to me now that Solomon was the truest man who ever spoke, and yet that he a little *managed* the truth with a view to popular conservatism; or else there have been many corruptions and interpolations of the text. —In reading some of Goethe's sayings, so worshipped by his votaries, I came across this, "*Live in the all*." That is to say, your separate identity is but a wretched one,—good; but get out of yourself, spread and expand yourself, and bring to yourself the tinglings of life that are felt in the flowers and the woods, that are felt in the planets Saturn and Venus, and the Fixed Stars. What nonsense! Here is a fellow with a raging toothache. "My dear boy," Goethe says to him, "you are sorely afflicted with that tooth; but you must *live in the all*, and then you will be happy!" As with all great genius, there is an immense deal of flummery in Goethe, and in proportion to my own contact with him, a monstrous deal of it in me.

H. MELVILLE.

P. S. "Amen!" saith Hawthorne.

N. B. This "all" feeling, though, there is some truth in. You must often have felt it, lying on the grass on a warm summer's day. Your legs seem to send out shoots into the earth. Your hair feels like leaves upon your head. This is the *all* feeling. But what plays the mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion.

P. S. You must not fail to admire my discretion in paying the postage on this letter.

from MOBY-DICK (1851)

It is difficult to represent Melville adequately in an anthology. The best of his short stories, like "Benito Cereno" and "The Encantadas," are very long. His greatest novel, *Moby-Dick*, should be read as a whole and not in selected bits. Perhaps the finest passage in it is the description of the fight with the White Whale at the end of the book, but reading that by itself is like reading the fifth act of a Shakespearean tragedy without having glanced at the preceding four which prepare for the tragic conclusion. The five brief selections given here, it is hoped, will make the student wish to read the whole

of Melville's masterpiece. They illustrate Melville's various styles ranging from colloquial to poetic prose, and they suggest the nature of the narrative and throw light upon what the White Whale stood for in the mind of Captain Ahab, the protagonist of the tragedy.

CHAPTER XXII. MERRY CHRISTMAS

- - - At length the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided. It was a short, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day merged into night, we found ourselves almost broad upon the wintry ocean, whose freezing spray cased us in ice, as in polished armor. The long rows of teeth on the bulwarks glistened in the moonlight; and like the white ivory tusks of some huge elephant, vast curving icicles depended from the bows.

Lank Bildad, as pilot, headed the first watch, and ever and anon, as the old craft deep dived into the green seas, and sent the shivering frost all over her, and the winds howled, and the cordage rang, his steady notes were heard,—

*"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between."*

Never did those sweet words sound more sweetly to me than then. They were full of hope and fruition. Spite of this frigid winter night in the boisterous Atlantic, spite of my wet feet and wetter jacket, there was yet, it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven in store; and meads and glades so eternally vernal, that the grass shot up by the spring, untrodden, unwilted, remains at midsummer.

At last we gained such an offing, that the two pilots were needed no longer. The stout sail-boat that had accompanied us began ranging alongside.

It was curious and not unpleasing, how Peleg and Bildad were affected at this juncture, especially Captain Bildad. For loath to depart, yet; very loath to leave, for good, a ship bound on so long and perilous a voyage—beyond both stormy Capes; a ship in which some thousands of his hard earned dollars were invested; a ship, in which an old shipmate sailed as captain; a man almost as old as he, once more starting to encounter all the terrors of the pitiless jaw; loath to say good-bye to a thing so every way brimful of every interest to him,—poor old Bildad lin-

gered long; paced the deck with anxious strides; ran down into the cabin to speak another farewell word there; again came on deck, and looked to windward; looked towards the wide and endless waters, only bounded by the far-off unseen Eastern Continents; looked towards the land; looked aloft; looked right and left; looked everywhere and nowhere; and at last, mechanically coiling a rope upon its pin, convulsively grasped stout Peleg by the hand, and holding up a lantern, for a moment stood gazing heroically in his face, as much as to say, "Nevertheless, friend Peleg, I can stand it; yes, I can."

As for Peleg himself, he took it more like a philosopher; but for all his philosophy, there was a tear twinkling in his eye, when the lantern came too near. And he, too, did not a little run from cabin to deck—now a word below, and now a word with Starbuck, the chief mate.

But, at last, he turned to his comrade, with a final sort of look about him,—“Captain Bildad—come, old shipmate, we must go. Back the mainyard there! Boat ahoy! Stand by to come close alongside, now! Careful, careful—come, Bildad, boy—say your last. Luck to ye, Starbuck—luck to ye, Mr. Stubb—luck to ye, Mr. Flask—good-bye, and good luck to ye all—and this day three years I’ll have a hot supper smoking for ye in old Nantucket. Hurrah and away!”

“God bless ye, and have ye in His holy keeping, men,” murmured old Bildad, almost incoherently. “I hope ye’ll have fine weather now, so that Captain Ahab may soon be moving among ye—a pleasant sun is all he needs, and ye’ll have plenty of them in the tropic voyage ye go. Be careful in the hunt, ye mates. Don’t stave the boats needlessly, ye harpooners; good white cedar plank is raised full three per cent. within the year. Don’t forget your prayers, either. Mr. Starbuck, mind that cooper don’t waste the spare staves. Oh! the sail-needles are in the green locker! Don’t whale it too much a’ Lord’s days, men; but don’t miss a fair chance either, that’s rejecting Heaven’s good gifts. Have an eye to the molasses tierce, Mr. Stubb; it was a little leaky, I thought. If ye touch at the islands, Mr. Flask, beware of fornication. Good-bye, good-bye! Don’t keep that cheese too long down in the hold, Mr. Starbuck; it’ll spoil. Be careful with the butter—twenty cents the pound it was, and mind ye, if—”

“Come, come, Captain Bildad; stop palaver-

ing,—away!” and with that, Peleg hurried him over the side, and both dropt into the boat.

Ship and boat diverged; the cold, damp night breeze blew between; a screaming gull flew overhead; the two hulls wildly rolled; we gave three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic.

CHAPTER XXVIII. AHAB

- - - Now, it being Christmas when the ship shot from out her harbor, for a space we had biting polar weather, though all the time running away from it to the southward; and by every degree and minute of latitude which we sailed, gradually leaving that merciless winter, and all its intolerable weather behind us. It was one of those less lowering, but still grey and gloomy enough mornings of the transition, when with a fair wind the ship was rushing through the water with a vindictive sort of leaping and melancholy rapidity, that as I mounted to the deck at the call of the forenoon watch, so soon as I levelled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck.

There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him, nor of the recovery from any. He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus. Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded. Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say. By some tacit consent, throughout the voyage little or no allusion was made to it, especially by the mates. But once Tashtego's senior, an old Gay-Head Indian

among the crew, superstitiously asserted that not till he was full forty years old did Ahab become that way branded, and then it came upon him, not in the fury of any mortal fray, but in an elemental strife at sea. Yet, this wild hint seemed inferentially negatived, by what a grey Manxman insinuated, an old sepulchral man, who, having never before sailed out of Nantucket, had never ere this laid eye upon wild Ahab. Nevertheless, the old sea-traditions, the immemorial credulities, popularly invested this old Manxman with preternatural powers of discernment. So that no white sailor seriously contradicted him when he said that if ever Captain Ahab should be tranquilly laid out—which might hardly come to pass, so he muttered—then, whoever should do that last office for the dead, would find a birth-mark on him from crown to sole.

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. “Aye, he was dismasted off Japan,” said the old Gay-Head Indian once; “but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of ‘em.”

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained. Upon each side of the Pequod's quarter-deck, and pretty close to the mizzen shrouds, there was an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so, into the plank. His bone steadied in that hole; one arm elevated, and holding by a shroud; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance. Not a word he spoke; nor did his officers say aught to him; though by all their minutest gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

Ere long, from his first visit in the air, he withdrew into his cabin. But after that morning, he was every day visible to the crew; either standing in his pivot-hole, or seated upon an ivory stool he had; or heavily walking the deck. As the sky grew less gloomy; indeed, began to grow a little genial, he became still less and less a recluse; as if, when the ship had sailed from home, nothing but the dead wintry bleakness of the sea had then kept him so secluded. And, by and by, it came to pass, that he was almost continually in the air; but, as yet, for all that he said, or perceptibly did, on the at last sunny deck, he seemed as unnecessary there as another mast. But the Pequod was only making a passage now; not regularly cruising; nearly all whaling preparatives needing supervision the mates were fully competent to, so that there was little or nothing, out of himself, to employ or excite Ahab, now; and thus chase away, for that one interval, the clouds that layer upon layer were piled upon his brow, as ever all clouds choose the loftiest peaks to pile themselves upon.

Nevertheless, ere long, the warm, warbling persuasiveness of the pleasant, holiday weather we came to, seemed gradually to charm him from his mood. For, as when the red-cheeked, dancing girls, April and May, trip home to the wintry, misanthropic woods; even the barest, ruggedest, most thunder-cloven old oak will at least send forth some few green sprouts, to welcome such glad-hearted visitants; so Ahab did, in the end, a little respond to the playful allurings of that girlish air. More than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile.

CHAPTER XXXVI: THE QUARTER-DECK

(Enter Ahab: Then all.)

It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the cabin-gangway to the deck. There most sea-captains usually walk at that hour, as country gentlemen, after the same meal, take a few turns in the garden.

Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar

mark of his walk. Did you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also, you would see still stranger footprints—the footprints of his one unsleeping, ever-pacing thought.

But on the occasion in question, those dents looked deeper, even as his nervous step that morning left a deeper mark. And, so full of his thought was Ahab, that at every uniform turn that he made, now at the mainmast and now at the binnacle, you could almost see that thought turn in him as he turned, and pace in him as he paced; so completely possessing him, indeed, that it all but seemed the inward mould of every outer movement.

"D' ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell. 'Twill soon be out."

The hours wore on;—Ahab now shut up within his cabin; anon, pacing the deck, with the same intense bigotry of purpose in his aspect.

It drew near the close of day. Suddenly he came to a halt by the bulwarks, and inserting his bone leg into the auger-hole there, and with one hand grasping a shroud, he ordered Starbuck to send everybody aft.

"Sir!" said the mate, astonished at an order seldom or never given on shipboard except in some extraordinary case.

"Send everybody aft," repeated Ahab. "Mast-heads, there! come down!"

When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not wholly unapprehensive faces were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike the weather horizon when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew, started from his standpoint; and as though not a soul were nigh him resumed his heavy turns upon the deck. With bent head and half-slouched hat he continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat. But this did not last long. Vehemently pausing, he cried:—

"What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"

"Sing out for him!" was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed voices.

"Good!" cried Ahab, with a wild approval in

his tones; observing the hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically thrown them.

"And what do ye next, men?"

"Lower away, and after him!"

"And what tune is it ye pull to, men?"

"A dead whale or a stove boat!"

More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving grew the countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began to gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they themselves became so excited at such seemingly purposeless questions.

But they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-revolving in his pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud, and tightly, almost convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus:—

"All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders about a white whale. Look ye! d' ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?"—holding up a broad bright coin to the sun—"it is a sixteen dollar piece, men. D' ye see it? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul."

While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without speaking, was slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of his vitality in him.

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced toward the mainmast with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming: "Whosoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw; whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes punctured in his starboard fluke—look ye, whosoever of ye raises me that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!"

"Huzza, huzza!" cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins they hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

"It's a white whale, I say," resumed Ahab, as he threw down the top-maul; "a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water; if ye see but a bubble sing out."

All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Quee-

queg¹ had looked on with even more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was separately touched by some specific recollection.

"Captain Ahab," said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that some call Moby-Dick."

"Moby-Dick?" shouted Ahab. "Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?"

"Does he fan-tail a little curious, sir, before he goes down?" said the Gay-Header deliberately.

"And has he a curious spout, too," said Daggoo, "very bushy, even for a parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?"

"And he have one, two, tree—oh! good many iron in him hide, too, captain," cried Queequeg disjointedly, "all twiske-tee betwisk, like him—him—" faltering hard for a word, and screwing his hand round and round as though uncorking a bottle—"like him—him—"

"Cork-screw!" cried Ahab, "ay, Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted and wrenched in him; ay, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the great annual sheep-shearing; ay, Tashtego, and he fan-tails like a split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby-Dick ye have seen—Moby Dick—Moby-Dick!"

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck,² who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby-Dick—but it was not Moby-Dick that took off thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Ay, Starbuck; ay, my hearties all round; it was Moby-Dick that dismasted me; Moby-Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now, Ay, ay," he shouted, with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; 'ay, ay! it was that accursed white whale that razed me; made a poor pegging lubber out of me for ever and a day!' Then tossing both arms,

¹ These three men are harpooners. Tashtego is an Indian; Daggoo, a gigantic Negro; and Queequeg, a South Sea Islander.

² Starbuck is the first mate. Stubb and Flask are the other mates.

with measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Ay, ay! and I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave."

"Ay, ay!" shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the excited old man; "a sharp eye for the White Whale; a sharp lance for Moby-Dick!"

"God bless ye," he seemed to half sob and half shout. "God bless ye, men. Steward! go draw the great measure of grog. But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the White Whale? art not game for Moby-Dick?"

"I am game for this crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too, Captain Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab! It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market."

"Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer. If money's to be the measure, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch; then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium *here!*"

"He smites his chest," whispered Stubb, "what's that for? methinks it rings most vast, but hollow."

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."

"Hark ye yet again,—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the moldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the White Whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I

think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the White Whale agent, or be the White Whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines. Take off thine eye! more intolerable than fiends' glarings is a doltish stare! So, so; thou reddened and palest; my heat has melted thee to anger-glow. But look ye, Starbuck, what is said in heat, that thing unsays itself. There are men from whom warm words are small indignity. I meant not to incense thee. Let it go. Look! see yonder Turkish cheeks of spotted tawn—living, breathing pictures painted by the sun. The pagan leopards—the unrecking and unworshipping things, that live; and seek, and give no reasons for the torrid life they feel! The crew, man, the crew! Are they not one and all with Ahab, in this matter of the whale? See Stubb! he laughs! See yonder Chilian! he snorts to think of it. Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot, Starbuck! And what is it? Reckon it. 'Tis but to help strike a fin; no wondrous feat for Starbuck. What is it more? From this one poor hunt, then, the best lance out of all Nantucket, surely he will not hang back, when every foremasthand has clutched a whetstone! Ah, constrainings seize thee; I see! the billow lifts thee! Speak, but speak!—Ay ay! thy silence, then, *that* voices thee. (*Aside*) Something shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion."

"God keep me!—keep us all!" murmured Starbuck lowly.

But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage; nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment their hearts sank in. For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with the stubbornness of life; the subterranean laugh died away; the

winds blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before. Ah, ye admonitions and warnings! why stay ye not when ye come? But rather are ye predictions than warnings, ye shadows! Yet not so much predictions from without, as verifications of the foregoing things within. For with little external to constrain us, the innermost necessities in our being, these still drive us on.

"The measure! the measure!" cried Ahab.

Receiving the brimming pewter, and turning to the harpooners, he ordered them to produce their weapons. Then ranging them before him near the capstan, with their harpoons in their hands, while his three mates stood at his side with their lances, and the rest of the ship's company formed a circle round the group; he stood for an instant searchingly eyeing every man of his crew. But those wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison; but, alas! only to fall into the hidden snare of the Indian.

"Drink and pass!" he cried, handing the heavy charged flagon to the nearest seaman. "The crew alone now drink. Round with it, round! Short draughts—long swallows, men; 'tis hot as Satan's hoof. So, so; it goes round excellently. It spirals in ye; forks out at the serpent-snapping eye. Well done; almost drained. That way it went, this way it comes. Hand it me—here's a hollow! Men, ye seem the years; so brimming life is gulped and gone. Steward, refill!

"Attend now, my braves; I have mustered ye all round this capstan; and ye, mates, flank me with your lances; and ye, harpooners, stand there with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that I may in some sort revive a noble custom of my fishermen fathers before me. O men, you will yet see that—Ha! boy, come back? bad pennies come not sooner. Hand it me. Why, now, this pewter had run brimming again, wert not thou St. Vitus' imp—away, thou ague!

"Advance, ye mates! Cross your lances full before me. Well done! Let me touch the axis." So saying, with extended arm, he grasped the three level, radiating lances at their crossed centre; while so doing, suddenly and nervously twitched them; meanwhile, glancing intently from Starbuck to Stubb, from Stubb to Flask. It seemed as though, by some nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the same

fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic life. The three mates quailed before his strong, sustained, and mystic aspect. Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of Starbuck fell downright.

"In vain!" cried Ahab; "but, maybe, 'tis well. For did ye three but once take the full-forced shock, then mine own electric thing, *that* had perhaps expired from out me. Perchance, too, it would have dropped ye dead. Perchance ye need it not. Down lances! And now, ye mates, I do appoint ye three cup-bearers to my three pagan kinsmen there—yon three most honourable gentlemen and nobleman, my valiant harpooners. Disdain the task? What, when the great Pope washes the feet of beggars, using his tiara for ewer? Oh, my sweet cardinals! your own condescension, *that* shell bend ye to it. I do not order ye; ye will it. Cut your seizings and draw the poles, ye harpooners!"

Silently obeying the order, the three harpooners now stood with the detached part of their harpoons, some three feet long, held, barbs up, before him.

"Stab me not with that keen steel! Cant them; cant them over! know ye not the goblet end? Turn up the socket! So, so; now, ye cup-bearers, advance. The irons! take them; hold them while I fill!" Forthwith, slowly going from one officer to the other, he brimmed the harpoon sockets with the fiery waters from the pewter.

"Now, three to three, ye stand. Commend the murderous chalices! Bestow them, ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league. Ha! Starbuck! but the deed is done! Yon ratifying sun now waits to sit upon it. Drink, ye harpooners! drink and swear, ye men that man the deathful whaleboat's bow—Death to Moby-Dick! God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby-Dick to his death!" The long, barbed steel goblets were lifted; and to cries and maledictions against the White Whale, the spirits were simultaneously quaffed down with a hiss. Starbuck paled, and turned, and shivered. Once more, and finally, the replenished pewter went the rounds among the frantic crew; when, waving his free hand to them, they all dispersed; and Ahab retired within his cabin.

CHAPTER XLI. MOBY-DICK

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and

more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetic feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge.

For some time past, though at intervals only, the unaccompanied, secluded White Whale had haunted those uncivilized seas most frequented by the Sperm Whale fishermen. But not all of them knew of his existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him; while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to him, was small indeed. For, owing to the large number of whale-cruisers; the disorderly way they were sprinkled over the entire watery circumference, many of them adventurously pushing their quest along solitary latitudes, so as seldom or never for a whole twelvemonth or more on a stretch, to encounter a single news-telling sail of any sort; the inordinate length of each separate voyage; the irregularity of the times of sailing from home; all these, with other circumstances, direct and indirect, long obstructed the spread through the whole world-wide whaling-fleet of the special individualizing tidings concerning Moby-Dick. It was hardly to be doubted, that several vessels reported to have encountered, at such or such a time, or on such or such a meridian, a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and malignity, which whale, after doing great mischief to his assailants, had completely escaped them; to some minds it was not an unfair presumption, I say, that the whale in question must have been no other than Moby-Dick. Yet as of late the Sperm whale fishery had been marked by various and not unfrequent instances of great ferocity, cunning, and malice in the monster attacked; therefore it was, that those who by accident ignorantly gave battle to Moby-Dick; such hunters, perhaps, for the most part, were content to ascribe the peculiar terrors he bred, more, as it were, to the perils of the Sperm Whale fishery at large, than to the individual cause. In that way, mostly, the disastrous encounter between Ahab and the whale had hitherto been popularly regarded.

And as for those who, previously hearing of the White Whale, by chance caught sight of him; in the beginning of the thing they had every one of them, almost, as boldly and fearlessly lowered

for him, as for any other whale of that species. But at length, such calamities did ensue in these assaults—not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or devouring amputations—but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors upon Moby-Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many brave hunters, to whom the story of the White Whale had eventually come.

Nor did wild rumors of all sorts fail to exaggerate, and still the more horrify the true histories of these deadly encounters. For not only do fabulous rumors naturally grow out of the very body of all surprising terrible events—as the smitten tree gives birth to its fungi; but, in maritime life, far more than in that of terra firma, wild rumors abound, wherever there is any adequate reality for them to cling to. And as the sea surpasses the land in this matter, so the whale fishery surpasses every other sort of maritime life, in the wonderfulness and fearfulness of the rumors which sometimes circulate there. For not only are whalemen as a body unexempt from that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary to all sailors; but of all sailors, they are by all odds the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them. Alone, in such remotest waters, that though you sailed a thousand miles, and passed a thousand shores, you would not come to any chiselled hearthstone, or aught hospitable beneath that part of the sun; in such latitudes and longitudes, pursuing too such a calling as he does, the whaleman is wrapped by influences all tending to make his fancy pregnant with many a mighty birth.

No wonder, then, that ever gathering volume from the mere transit over the wildest watery spaces, the outblown rumors of the White Whale did in the end incorporate with themselves all manner of morbid hints, and half-formed foetal suggestions of supernatural agencies, which eventually invested Moby-Dick with new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears. So that in many cases such a panic did he finally strike, that few who by these rumors, at least, had heard of the White Whale, few of those hunters were willing to encounter the perils of his jaw. - - -

Forced into familiarity, then, with such

prodigies as these; and knowing that after repeated, intrepid assaults, the White Whale had escaped alive; it cannot be much matter of surprise that some whalemens should go still further in their superstitions; declaring Moby-Dick not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time); that though groves of spears should be planted in his flanks, he would still swim away unharmed; or if indeed he should ever be made to spout thick blood, such a sight would be but a ghastly deception; for again in unensanguined billows hundreds of leagues away, his unsullied jet would once more be seen.

But even stripped of these supernatural surroundings, there was enough in the earthly make and incontestable character of the monster to strike the imagination with unwonted power. For, it was not so much his uncommon bulk that so much distinguished him from other sperm whales, but, as was elsewhere thrown out—a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidal white hump. These were his prominent features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he revealed his identity, at a long distance, to those who knew him.

The rest of his body was so streaked, and spotted, and marbled with the same shrouded hue, that, in the end, he had gained his distinctive appellation of the White Whale; a name, indeed, literally justified by his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon through a dark blue sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleamings.

Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror, as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over evinced in his assaults. More than all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught else. For, when swimming before his exulting pursuers, with every apparent symptom of alarm, he had several times been known to turn round suddenly, and, bearing down upon them, either stave their boats to splinters, or drive them back in consternation to their ship.

Already several fatalities had attended his chase. But though similar disasters, however little bruited ashore, were by no means unusual

in the fishery; yet, in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent.

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury the minds of his more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the chips of chewed boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam out of the white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene, exasperating sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the eddies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby-Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeming malice. Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east revered in their statue devil;—Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred White Whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby-Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate

felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

It is not probable that this monomania in him took its instant rise at the precise time of his bodily dismemberment. Then, in darting at the monster, knife in hand, he had but given loose to a sudden, passionate, corporal animosity; and when he received the stroke that tore him, he probably but felt the agonizing bodily laceration, but nothing more. Yet, when by this collision forced to turn towards home, and for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in midwinter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward voyage, after the encounter, that the final monomania seized him, seems all but certain from the fact that, at intervals during the passage, he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a leg, yet such vital strength lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was moreover intensified by his delirium, that his mates were forced to lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. In a strait-jacket, he swung to the mad rockings of the gales. And, when running into more sufferable latitudes, the ship, with mild stun'sails spread, floated across the tranquil tropics, and, to all appearances, the old man's delirium seemed left behind him with the Cape Horn swells, and he came forth from his dark den into the blessed light and air; even then, when he bore that firm, collected front, however pale, and issued his calm orders once again; and his mates thanked God the direful madness was now gone; even then, Ahab, in his hidden self, raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but become transfigured into some still subtler form. Ahab's full lunacy subsided not, but deepeningly contracted; like the unabated Hudson, when that noble Northman flows narrowly, but unfathomably through the Highland gorge. But, as in his narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of Ahab's broad madness had been left behind; so in that broad madness, not one jot of his great natural intellect had perished. That before living agent, now became the living instrument. If such a furious trope may stand, his

special lunacy stormed his general sanity, and carried it, and turned all its concentrated cannon upon its own mad mark; so that far from having lost his strength, Ahab, to that one end, did now possess a thousandfold more potency than ever he had sanely brought to bear upon any one reasonable object.

This is much; yet Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part remains unhinted. But vain to popularize profundities, and all truth is profound. Winding far down within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny where we here stand—however grand and wonderful, now quit it;—and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes; where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes! So with a broken throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid, he patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of ages. Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! question that proud, sad king! A family likeness! aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.

Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad. Yet without power to kill, or change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long dissemble; in some sort, did still. But that thing of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate. Nevertheless, so well did he succeed in that dissembling, that when with ivory leg he stepped ashore at last, no Nantucketer thought him otherwise than but naturally grieved, and that to the quick, with the terrible casualty which had overtaken him.

The report of his undeniable delirium at sea was likewise ascribed to a kindred cause. And so too, all the added moodiness which always afterwards, to the very day of sailing in the Pequod on the present voyage, sat brooding on his brow. Nor is it very unlikely, that far from distrusting his fitness for another whaling voyage, on account of such dark symptoms, the calculating people of that prudent isle were inclined to harbor the conceit, that for those very reasons he was all the better qualified and set on edge, for a pursuit so full of rage and wildness

as the bloody hunt of whales. Gnawed within and scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable idea; such an one, could he be found, would seem the very man to dart his iron and lift his lance against the most appalling of all brutes. Or, if for any reason thought to be corporeally incapacitated for that, yet such an one would seem superlatively competent to cheer and howl on his underlings to the attack. But be all this as it may, certain it is, that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in him, Ahab had purposely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale. Had any one of his old acquaintances on shore but half dreamed of what was lurking in him then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the ship from such a fiendish man! They were bent on profitable cruises, the profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint. He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.

Here, then, was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals—morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask. Such a crew, so officered, seemed specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him to his monomaniac revenge. How was it that they so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire—by what evil magic their souls were possessed, that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much their insufferable foe as his; how all this came to be—what the White Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in some dim unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life,—all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go. The subterranean miner that works in us all, how can one tell whither leads his shaft by the ever shifting, muffled sound of his pick? Who does not feel the irresistible arm drag? What skiff in tow of a seventy-four can stand still? For one, I gave myself up to the abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all

a-rush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill.

CHAPTER CXI. THE PACIFIC

5 When gliding by the Bashee isles we emerged at last upon the great South Sea; were it not for other things, I could have greeted my dear Pacific with uncounted thanks, for now the long supplication of my youth was answered; that serene ocean rolled eastwards from me a thousand leagues of blue.

There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath; like those fabled undulations of the Ephesian sod over the buried Evangelist St. John. And meet it is, that over these sea-pastures, wide-rolling watery prairies and Potters' Fields of all four continents, the waves should rise and fall, and ebb and flow unceasingly; for here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness.

To any meditative Magian rover, this serene Pacific, once beheld, must ever after be the sea of his adoption. It rolls the midmost waters of the world, the Indian ocean and Atlantic being but its arms. The same waves wash the moles of the new-built California towns, but yesterday planted by the recentest race of men, and lave the faded but still gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between float milky-ways of coral isles, and low-lying, endless, unknown Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans. Thus this mysterious, divine Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth. Lifted by those eternal swells, you needs must own the seductive god, bowing your head to Pan.

But few thoughts of Pan stirred Ahab's brain, as standing like an iron statue at his accustomed place beside the mizen rigging, with one nostril he unthinkingly snuffed the sugary musk from the Bashee isles (in whose sweet woods mild lovers must be walking), and with the other consciously inhaled the salt breath of the new found sea; that sea in which the hated White Whale must even then be swimming. Launched at length upon these almost final waters, and gliding

towards the Japanese cruising-ground, the old man's purpose intensified itself. His firm lips met like the lips of a vice; the Delta of his forehead's veins swelled like overlaiden brooks; in

his very sleep, his ringing cry ran through the vaulted hull. "Stern all! the White Whale spouts thick blood!"

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

1803 - 1882

As Wordsworth's poetry is, in my judgment, the most important work done in verse, in our language, during the present century, so Emerson's Essays are, I think, the most important work done in prose.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, "Emerson" (1883).

Emerson was born in Boston on May 25, 1803—one year before Hawthorne, four before Longfellow and Whittier, and six before Holmes, Poe, Lincoln, Tennyson, and Darwin. On the paternal side he came of a long line of ministers; and in that respect there is no better representative of the Brahmin caste of New England than he. His father, William Emerson, the minister of the First Church in Boston, died in 1811, leaving the widow with a family of boys to bring up. There was something Spartan about Emerson's boyhood. The brothers did much of the house work, and the family was so poor that at times Emerson had to share an overcoat with his younger brother Edward.

An important influence was that of Emerson's unmarried aunt, Mary Moody Emerson,¹ who was determined that her nephews should attain to intellectual distinction. "My aunt," says Emerson in a sketch of her, "had an eye that went through and through you like a needle." To judge from her letters, she must have had some influence upon Emerson's prose style. Among the "high counsels" which she gave her nephew is the following: "Scorn trifles, lift your aims: do what you are afraid to do: sublimity of character must come from sublimity of motive: . . ."

After four years at the Boston Latin School, Emerson entered Harvard College at the age of fourteen. Like many a later college boy, he had to work to make his way through college. As "President's freshman," he summoned delinquents and announced to the students the faculty's orders. He also waited on the tables at commons. Although he did not distinguish himself as a student, he won the Boylston Prize of thirty dollars for declamation. He wished the prize money to be used to buy something for his mother; but it went, to his chagrin, to pay the baker's bill. The course of study at Harvard was in some respects little more advanced than

¹ For Mary Moody Emerson, see Emerson's *Works*, X, 397-433; Van Wyck Brooks, *Emerson and Others*; and Roy F. Dibble, "She Lived to Give Pain," *Century Magazine*, July, 1926.

that of a modern preparatory school, but Emerson profited from at least three notable teachers: Edward Tyrrell Channing, who taught him English composition; George Ticknor, Longfellow's predecessor as Smith Professor of Modern Languages; and Edward Everett, Professor of Greek and later President of Harvard and Senator from Massachusetts. "Everett," wrote Emerson in 1838, "has put more stories, sentences, verses, names in amber for me than any other person." Everett, Ticknor, and Emerson's older brother William were among the first Americans to study in Germany, and they brought back with them ideas and methods which were greatly to influence New England scholarship and thinking. Emerson was graduated from Harvard in 1821 at the age of eighteen. He was pleased when chosen poet of the class, although seven others are said to have declined the honor before it was offered to him. Emerson's *Journals*, which go back to January, 1820, when he was a Junior, reveal an earnest young man doing a considerable amount of reading and thinking for himself.

For three years after graduation he taught in his brother William's school for young ladies, for there were younger brothers to be put through college. Emerson was in charge of the school one year while William was studying theology at the University of Göttingen. Teaching in a girls' school can hardly have been a congenial task for a shy youth who had grown up without sisters. One might infer as much from the poem, written at this time, which begins "Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home."

It was almost inevitable that a young man of Emerson's antecedents should go into the Unitarian ministry. If he disliked teaching, what else was there for him to do? His theological work at the Harvard Divinity School was irregular. He began preaching in 1826. Afterwards he said that if the authorities had inquired into his theological views, they would have refused him the license to preach.

Until after 1832 Emerson's health was precarious. In 1826 he went to Florida for the winter. His visit to the South had no such important influence as his trip to Europe in 1833; but he was impressed, as Bronson Alcott had been before him, with "the change and amelioration of manners" as he went southward. He was greatly interested in Achille Murat, son of Napoleon's King of Naples, then a planter in Florida. This was probably the young clergyman's first acquaintance with an intelligent and sceptical European.

In 1829 Emerson was called as minister to the Second Church in Boston. In the same year he was married to Ellen Louisa Tucker, who died two years later. Emerson's sermons are said to have been delivered in a simple, unconventional style. There were no complaints of his ministry, but a story told by his successor indicates that the young minister did not excel in certain pastoral duties. A Revolutionary veteran, to whose death-bed Emerson had been summoned, noting some hesitation or awkwardness on the minister's part, is said to have risen in wrath and exclaimed, "Young man, if you don't know your business, you had better go home." Entries in the journals make it clear that Emerson could never have been permanently happy in the ministry. Here are some of them:

"A sect or party is an elegant incognito devised to save a man from the vexation of thinking."

"It is the best part of the man, I sometimes think, that revolts most against his being a minister. His good revolts from official goodness."

"I have sometimes thought that, in order to be a good minister, it was necessary to leave the ministry. The profession is antiquated. In an altered age, we worship in the dead forms of our forefathers. Were not a Socratic paganism better than an effete, superannuated Christianity?"

The immediate occasion of Emerson's giving up his church was a disagreement with his congregation over the Lord's Supper, which the independent clergyman found himself unable to regard as a sacrament to be administered on stated occasions.

After 1832 Emerson gradually gave up preaching altogether so far as the pulpit was concerned. In a sense he never ceased to preach—it was in his blood—and he merely substituted for the pulpit the lecture platform and the printed page. It is important that those who are reading Emerson for the first time should remember that his style is that of a lecturer rather than that of a writer. This is apparent when his prose is read aloud. It is important also that the student should see that Emerson's semi-clerical language often conveys ideas which were not those of orthodox clergymen.

"The ties had long been loosening," remarks Parrington, "but it was his year abroad where he discovered ways of thinking unknown to Concord and Boston, that effectively liberalized his mind and released him from the narrow Yankee provincialisms." It was on Christmas Day, 1832, that Emerson sailed for Europe. He went partly for his health, like Irving before him; but his primary object was to see four British authors: Walter Savage Landor, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the then little known Thomas Carlyle. He went out of his way to find Carlyle "amid desolate heathery hills" at Craigenputtock in southern Scotland. The visit marks the beginning of a notable literary friendship, which found its best expression in a remarkable series of letters extending from 1834 to 1872. Emerson paid somewhat more attention to the sights which tourists go to Europe to see than one might infer from the well-known passage in "Self-Reliance": "Travelling is a fool's paradise"; but he did not travel in the romantic and reverential mood of Irving or Longfellow. Like Hawthorne and Mark Twain, he was not to be awed. "I see no reason why I should bow my head to man, or cringe in my demeanour," he had written in his journal when a boy of twenty. In Liverpool, where he took passage for home in September, 1833, he wrote this significant review of his pilgrimage:

"I thank the Great God who has led me through this European scene, this last schoolroom in which he has pleased to instruct me, from Malta's isle, through Sicily, through Italy, through Switzerland, through France, through England, through Scotland, in safety and pleasure, and has now brought me to the shore and the ship that steers westward. He has shown me the men I wished to see,—Landor, Coleridge, Carlyle, Wordsworth; he has thereby comforted and confirmed me in my convictions. Many things I owe to the sight of these men. I shall judge more justly, less timidly, of wise men forevermore. To be sure not one of these is a mind of the very first class, but what the intercourse with each of these suggests is true of intercourse with better men, that they never *fill the ear*—fill the mind—no, it is an *idealized* portrait which always we draw of them. Upon an intelligent man, wholly a stranger to their names, they would make in conversation no deep impression, none of a world-filling fame,—they would be remembered as sensible, well-read, earnest men, not more. Especially are they all deficient, all these four,—

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in different degrees, but all deficient,—in insight into religious truth. They have no idea of that species of moral truth which I call the first philosophy. . . .

“The comfort of meeting men of genius such as these is that they talk sincerely, they feel themselves to be so rich that they are above the meanness of pretending to knowledge which they have not, and they frankly tell you what puzzles them. But Carlyle—Carlyle is so amiable that I love him.”

In November, 1834, Emerson moved to Concord, where he made his home the remainder of his life. For nearly a year he lived in the Old Manse, which had been built by his grandfather, the minister who had encouraged the minute-men to fight the British in the first battle of the Revolution. Hawthorne was later to live in the Old Manse and to describe it in a well-known essay. In September, 1835, Emerson married Lydia Jackson, who at his suggestion changed her name to Lidian. After 1835 Emerson's life was outwardly uneventful. His lectures, although most of them were delivered in New England, carried him eventually as far west as Wisconsin. In 1847-1848 he lectured in England. He visited California in 1871. He was an interested spectator of the life of his time, but he took no active part in the Brook Farm experiment and only occasionally spoke in behalf of the antislavery movement. He did, however, edit the *Dial* for two years after Margaret Fuller gave it up; and he seems to have made up the deficit out of his own pocket. In 1842 he was profoundly grieved by the death of his little son, the “wondrous child” of his elegy, “Threnody.” In Concord he was intimate with Thoreau and with Bronson Alcott, the “tedious archangel” of the *Journals*. He thought highly of Hawthorne as a man, but he did not care for the latter's books. He was on familiar terms with the Boston-Cambridge writers, whom he dined with at the Saturday Club; but few of them shared his Transcendental outlook on life.

During the last decade of his life Emerson's memory began to fail him, and he soon found it difficult either to write or to lecture. In *The Americanization of Edward Bok* there is a moving picture of the aged sage whose mind had become almost a blank. Dr. Holmes, who lived to write a life of Emerson for the American Men of Letters series, has described the last occasion on which he saw Emerson. It was at Longfellow's funeral in 1882, only a month before Emerson's death. Emerson, he says, rose and looked intently at the face of the dead poet, then turned to a friend and said, “That gentleman was a sweet, beautiful soul, but I have entirely forgotten his name.” Emerson died on April 24, 1882, and was buried in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord.

In studying Emerson it is important that the reader should have a clear conception of the man himself. Fortunately, there are many interesting accounts. The English poet, Arthur Hugh Clough, a student at Oxford University, gives a glimpse of Emerson during his British lecture tour in 1848:

“He came to Oxford just at the end of Lent term, and stayed three days. Everybody liked him, and as the orthodox mostly had never heard of him, they did not suspect him. He is the quietest, plainest, unobtrusivest man possible; will talk, but will rarely *discourse* to more than a single person, and wholly declines ‘roaring.’ He is very Yankee to look at, lank and sallow, and not quite without the twang; but his looks and voice are pleasing nevertheless, and give you the impression of perfect intellectual cultivation, as completely as would any great scientific man

in England—Faraday or Owen, for instance, more in their way perhaps than in that of Wordsworth or Carlyle. I have been with him a great deal; for he came over to Paris and was there a month, during which time we dined together daily: and since that I have seen him often in London, and finally here [Liverpool]. One thing that struck everybody is that he is much less Emersonian than his Essays. There is no dogmatism or arbitrariness about him.” (*The Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough*, edited by his wife, 1881, I, 137).

An English visitor to the Northern states during the Civil War, Edward Dickey, gives a glimpse of Concord as well as Emerson, in his *Six Months in the Federal States* (1863):

“Concord has nearer and dearer claims to the thoughts of all English-speaking people than the memory of an obscure battle. It is the home of Emerson and Hawthorne. An old-fashioned, sleepy, New England village; one broad, long, rambling street of wooden houses, standing for the most part apart, and overshadowed by leafy trees; a quiet village-green or two; shady, dreamy-looking graveyards, filled with old moss-covered tombstones of colonists who lived and died subjects of the Crown of England; a rich, marshy valley, hemmed in by low-wooded hills; and a dull, lazy stream, oozing on so slowly through many turnings, that you fancy it is afraid of being carried out to the ocean that awaits it a few miles away;—these are the outward *memorabilia* of Concord. Passing through the village, you come to a roomy country-house, buried almost beneath trees, and looking the model of a quiet English parsonage; and then, entering it, it must be some fault of your own, if you are not welcome at the kindly home of Emerson.

“His is not a face or figure to which photographs can do justice. The tall spare form, the strongly-marked features, and the thin scanty hair, are all, to the English mind, typical, as it were, of that distinct American nationality, of which Mr. Emerson has been the ablest, if not the first exponent. In repose, I fancy, his prevailing expression would be somewhat grave, with a shade of sadness; but the true charm of his face can be learnt only if you hear him speaking. Then, when the ‘slow wise smile,’ as someone well called it, plays about that grim-set mouth, and the flow of those lucid sentences, so simple and yet so perfect, pours forth in calm, measured sequence, the large liquid eyes seem to kindle with a magnetic light, and you feel yourself in the presence of a living power. You may sit at his feet or not—that is a matter for your own judgment, but a Gamaliel is there. Hearing him thus speak, I understood, better than I had learnt from his writings, the influence which Mr. Emerson has wielded over the mind of America, and how Concord has become a kind of Mecca, of which the representative man of American thought is the Mahomet.”

In an essay, “Emerson the Lecturer,” James Russell Lowell has left a somewhat more favorable impression of Emerson as a lecturer than he gives in a letter, July 18, 1867, to Charles Eliot Norton:

“Emerson’s oration [before the Phi Beta Kappa Society] was more disjointed than usual, even with *him*. It began nowhere and ended everywhere, and yet, as always with that divine man, it left you feeling that something beautiful had passed that way—something more beautiful than anything else, like the rising and setting of stars. Every possible criticism might have been made on it but one—that it was

not noble. There was a tone in it that awakened all elevating associations. He boggled, he lost his place, he had to put on his glasses; but it was as if a creature from some fairer world had lost his way in our fogs, and it was *our* fault, not his. It was chaotic, but it was all such stuff as stars are made of, and you couldn't help feeling that, if you waited awhile, all that was nebulous would be whirled into planets, and would assume the mathematical gravity of system. All through it I felt something in me that cried, 'Ha, ha, to the sound of the trumpet!'

Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), coming back to America in 1873 with Emerson, who had visited Europe for the third and last time, wrote in his journal a long account from which the following paragraphs are taken:

"Emerson was the greatest talker in the ship's company. He talked with all men, and yet was fresh and zealous for talk at night. His serene sweetness, the pure whiteness of his soul, the reflection of his soul in his face, were never more apparent to me; but never before in intercourse with him had I been so impressed with the limits of his mind. His optimistic philosophy has hardened into a creed, with the usual effects of a creed in closing the avenues of truth. He can accept nothing as fact that tells against his dogma. His optimism becomes a bigotry, and, though of a nobler type than the common American conceit of the preëminent excellence of American things as they are, has hardly less of the quality of fatalism. To him this is the best of all possible worlds, and the best of all possible times. He refuses to believe in disorder or evil. Order is the absolute law; disorder but a phenomenon; good is absolute, evil but good in the making. . . .

"He was born with the century, and his soul received its bent from the innocent America of before 1830. He breathed in the confident, sweet, morning spirit of a time when America believed that the 4th of July, the Declaration of Independence, the common school, and the four years Presidential term, were finalities in political science and social happiness; of a time when society was simple, and comparatively innocent; when our institutions and our progress were the wonder of de Tocqueville and the Old World, and the delight of ourselves; when there were Peace Societies, and it seemed to the youth uninstructed in the past as if the Millennium were really not so very far off. His philosophy was of necessity one of hope; the gospel of prosperity; and it was settled so far as its influence on thought, action, and character were concerned, before General Jackson was chosen President and we had entered on the new and less child-like epoch of our modern democracy. . . .

"He blushed like a youth one day when I spoke to him of his influence on the men of my generation; and of its being one of the chief factors of the intellectual condition of America at the present time. He would not hearken to such a suggestion, would not admit the idea of his influence, he had done nothing to give direction to the intellectual tendencies of the nation, he had only been in sympathy with what had proved to be the prevailing national currents of thought and feeling, though at first it might have seemed as if they were partial and local. He had been very fortunate in his times." (*The Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, 503 ff.).

Probably no author of Emerson's eminence ever held so low an opinion of pure literature. In 1838 he wrote in his journal: "I said to Bryant and to these young people, that the high poetry of the world from the beginning has been ethical, and it is the tendency of the ripe modern mind to produce it." Is there a single important writer of the twentieth century who

would agree with this doctrine? Emerson was not primarily a "literary" figure or a philosopher; he was what Professor W. P. Trent has termed him, "an ethical stimulator," or, in Matthew Arnold's words, "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." He was more of a poet than a philosopher.

Yet Emerson's hold on the modern reader is to be explained not only by the vitality of his ideas but by his literary power. His method of composition suggests why he is at his best in brief passages. He wrote down his thoughts in his journals. From his journals he took the passages that became the heart of his lectures; from the lectures and the journals grew the essays. In organization such an essay as "Self-Reliance" may be disjointed or even obscure, but the individual sentences are carefully pointed and polished. No other American has said so many fine things or made shrewder comments upon life.

The poems are more likely to give trouble to the undergraduate student than the essays or the lectures. Admirers of Emerson, however, sometimes prefer the poems to the essays; they are certainly a more compact expression of his ideas. Edwin Arlington Robinson has been quoted as expressing the opinion that Emerson is the greatest American poet. The poems should be read in the light of the essay on "The Poet"—although Emerson does not always write the kind of poetry the essay would lead us to expect. He is at his best in short passages. He wrote in his journal in 1848, "Every poem must be made up of lines that are poems." His sense of poetic form was defective. One suspects him of rationalizing when he wrote in "The Poet": "For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem,—a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing." He once remarked to J. T. Trowbridge: "I feel it a hardship that—with something of a lover's passion for what is to me the most precious thing in life, poetry—I have no gift of fluency in it, only a rude and stammering utterance." Too many of his poems are written in metrical forms that are not the best he might have chosen. After reading the "Ode to Beauty," Thoreau wrote to him: "The tune is altogether unworthy of the thoughts. You slope too quickly to the rhyme, as if that trick should be performed as soon as possible, or as if you stood over the line with a hatchet and chopped off the verses as they came out, some short and some long. But give us a long reel and we'll chop it off to suit ourselves. It sounds like parody." A just estimate of Emerson's poems appears in Longfellow's journal, December 26, 1846:

"Received from Emerson a copy of his Poems. F. [Mrs. Longfellow] read it to me all the evening and until late at night. It gave us the keenest pleasure; though many of the pieces present themselves Sphinx-like, and 'struggling to get free their hinder-parts,' offer a very bold front and challenge your answer. Throughout the volume, through the golden mist and sublimation of fancy gleam bright veins of purest poetry, like rivers running through meadows. Truly, a rare volume; with many exquisite poems in it, among which I should single out 'Monadnoc,' 'Threnody,' 'The Humble-bee,' as containing much of the quintessence of poetry."

The official biography is J. E. Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1887) in two volumes, but it is hardly a book for the beginner. Ralph L. Rusk's biography (1949) is by far the best life of Emerson. There are other biographies by G. W. Cooke (1881), Moncure D. Conway (1882), Oliver Wendell Holmes (1885), Richard Garnett (1888), F. B. Sanborn (1901),

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George E. Woodberry (1907), and Van Wyck Brooks (1932). See also *Emerson in Concord* (1889), by his son Edward W. Emerson. More illuminating than most of the biographies are *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872*, edited by Charles Eliot Norton (1883), and the ten volumes of Emerson's *Journals* (1909-1914). Bliss Perry (ed.), *The Heart of Emerson's Journals* (1926) is an admirable introduction to Emerson. See also the essay on Emerson in W. C. Brownell, *American Prose Masters* (1909), Walt Whitman's "Emerson's Books (The Shadows of Them)," and Matthew Arnold's lecture, given in his *Discourses in America*. There is a usable bibliography in F. I. Carpenter, *Ralph Waldo Emerson; Representative Selections* (1934). Indispensable to the investigator is *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (6 vols., 1939), edited by Ralph L. Rusk, who also wrote the best life of Emerson (1949). More recent publications are: A. C. McGiffert, *Young Emerson Speaks* (1938); Townsend Scudder III, *The Lonely Wayfaring Man: Emerson and Some Englishmen* (1936); and Hubert H. Hoeltje, *Sheltering Tree: A Story of the Friendship of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Amos Bronson Alcott* (1943). For Emerson's methods as a lecturer, see W. N. Brigance (ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address* (1943). See also Walter Blair and Clarence Faust, "Emerson's Literary Method," *Modern Philology*, XLIII, 79-95 (November, 1944); Harry Hayden Clark, "Emerson and Science," *Philological Quarterly*, X, 225-260 (July, 1931); and Clarence Gohdes, "A Gossip on Emerson's Treatment of Beauty," *Open Court*, XLV, 315-320 (May, 1931). F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (1941), contains an excellent study of Emerson's writings. Robert E. Spiller is the author of the chapter on Emerson in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). Kenneth W. Cameron (ed.), *Emerson the Essayist* (2 vols., 1945), reprints much material which influenced the development of Emerson's thought. Further references may be found in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

from EMERSON'S JOURNALS* (1909-1914)

CANTERBURY [1824]

- - - There is another sort of book which appears now and then in the world, once in two or three centuries perhaps, and which soon or late gets a foothold in popular esteem. I allude to those books which collect and embody the wisdom of their times, and so mark the stages of human improvement. Such are the Proverbs of Solomon, the Essays of Montaigne, and eminently the Essays of Bacon. Such also (though in my judgment in far less degree) is the proper merit of Mr. Pope's judicious poems, the Moral Essays and Essay on Man, which, without originality, seize upon all the popular speculations

floating among sensible men and give them in a compact graceful form to the following age. I should like to add another volume to this valuable work. I am not so foolhardy as to write 5 *Sequel to Bacon* on my title-page; and there are some reasons that induce me to suppose that the undertaking of this enterprise does not imply any censurable arrogance. - - -

CAMBRIDGE, September 28 [1826]

- - - I was born cold. My bodily habit is cold. I shiver in and out; don't heat to the good purposes called enthusiasm a quarter so quick and kindly as my neighbors. - - -

CAMBRIDGE [1828]

It is a peculiarity (I find by observation upon others) of humour in me, my strong propensity for strolling. I deliberately shut up my books 20 in a cloudy June noon, put on my old clothes and old hat and slink away to the whortleberry

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bushes and slip with the greatest satisfaction into a little cowpath where I am sure I can defy observation. This point gained, I solace myself for hours with picking blueberries and other trash of the woods, far from fame, behind the birch-trees. I seldom enjoy hours as I do these. I remember them in winter; I expect them in spring. I do not know a creature that I think has the same humour, or would think it respectable. - - -

BROOKLINE, *August 18* [1830]

The sun shines and warms and lights us and we have no curiosity to know why this is so; but we ask the reason of all evil, of pain, and hunger, and mosquitoes and silly people.

NEWTON, *October 20* [1833]

God defend me from ever looking at a man as an animal. God defend me from the vice of my constitution, an excessive desire of sympathy.

NEWTON, *April 12* [1834]

All the mistakes I make arise from forsaking my own station and trying to see the object from another person's point of view.

NEWTON, *June 18* [1834]

Webster's speeches seem to be the utmost that the unpoetic West has accomplished or can. We all lean on England; scarce a verse, a page, a newspaper, but is writ in imitation of English forms; our very manners and conversation are traditional, and sometimes the life seems dying out of all literature, and this enormous paper currency of Words is accepted instead. I suppose the evil may be cured by this rank rabble party, the Jacksonism of the country, heedless of English and of all literature—a stone cut out of the ground without hands;—they may root out the hollow dilettantism of our cultivation in the coarsest way, and the newborn may begin again to frame their own world with greater advantage.

August 27 [1836]

To-day came to me the first proof-sheet of *Nature* to be corrected, like a new coat, full of vexations; with the first sentences of the chapters perched like mottoes aloft in small type! The peace of an author cannot be wounded by such trifles, if he sees that the sentences are still

good. A good sentence can never be put out of countenance by any blunder of compositors.

September 28 [1836]

5 Why is there no genius in the Fine Arts in this country?

In sculpture Greenough is picturesque; in painting, Allston; in Poetry, Bryant; in Eloquence, Channing; in Architecture, —; in Fiction, Irving, Cooper; in all, feminine; no character.

1st reason: Influence of Europe, mainly of England. - - -

2nd reason. They are not called out by the necessity of the people. Poetry, music, sculpture, painting were all enlisted in the service of Patriotism and Religion. The statue was to be worshipped, the picture also. The poem was a confession of faith. A vital faith built the cathedrals of Europe. But who cares to see a poem of Bryant's, or a statue of Greenough, or a picture of Allston? The people never see them. The mind of the race has taken another direction,—Property.

October 18 [1837]

One of the last secrets we learn as scholars is to confide in our own impressions of a book. If Æschylus is that man he is taken for, he has not yet done his office when he has educated the learned of Europe for a thousand years. He is now to approve himself a master of delight to me. If he cannot do that, all his fame shall avail him nothing. I were a fool not to sacrifice a thousand Æschyluses to my intellectual integrity.

April 1 [1838]

Cool or cold, windy, clear day. The Divinity School youths wish to talk with me concerning Theism. I went rather heavy-hearted, for I always find that my views chill or shock people at the first opening. But the conversation went well and I came away cheered. I told them that the preacher should be a poet smit with love of the harmonies of moral nature;—and yet look at the Unitarian Association and see if its aspect is poetic. They all smiled No. A minister nowadays is plainest prose, the prose of prose. He is a warming-pan, a night-chair at sickbeds and rheumatic souls; and the fire of the minstrel's eye and the vivacity of his word is exchanged

for intense, grumbling enunciation of the Cambridge sort, and for scripture phraseology.

June 13 [1838]

The unbelief of the age is attested by the loud condemnation of trifles. Look at our silly religious papers. Let a minister wear a cane, or a white hat, go to a theatre, or avoid a Sunday School, let a school-book with a Calvinistic sentence or a Sunday School book without one be heard of, and instantly all the old grannies squeak and gibber and do what they call "sounding an alarm," from Bangor to Mobile. Alike nice and squeamish is its ear. You must on no account say "stink" or "Damn."

May 23 [1839]

A College.—My College should have Allston, Greenough, Bryant, Irving, Webster, Alcott, summoned for its domestic professors. And if I must send abroad (and, if we send for dancers and singers and actors, why not at the same prices for scholars?), Carlyle, Hallam, Campbell, should come and read lectures on History, Poetry, Letters. I would bid my men come for the love of God and man, promising them an open field and a boundless opportunity, and they should make their own terms. Then I would open my lecture rooms to the wide nation; and they should pay, each man, a fee that should give my professor a remuneration fit and noble. Then I should see the lecture-room, the college, filled with life and hope. Students would come from afar; for who would not ride a hundred miles to hear some one of these men giving his selectest thoughts to those who received them with joy? I should see living learning; the Muse once more in the eye and cheek of the youth.

April 7 [1840]

In all my lectures, I have taught one doctrine, namely, the infinitude of the private man¹. This

¹ On July 4, 1847, Emerson wrote to Harrison Gray Otis Blake: "These two facts—that our selves are somebodies, & may be relied on as good for some performance, and then that our private roots run down into the great Perfection;—if trite & truistical—are still the two articles of my creed, and they both certainly furnish the just basis for the doctrine of inspiration, and for every other piece of courage and forwardness" (Rusk, *Letters of . . . Emerson*, III, 405).

the people accept readily enough, and even with loud commendation, as long as I call the lecture Art, or Politics, or Literature, or the Household; but the moment I call it Religion, they are shocked, though it be only the application of the same truth which they receive everywhere else, to a new class of facts.

June 24 [1840]

Montaigne.—The language of the street is always strong. What can describe the folly and emptiness of scolding like the word *jawing*? I feel too the force of the double negative, though clean contrary to our grammar rules. And I confess to some pleasure from the stinging rhetoric of a rattling oath in the mouth of truckmen and teamsters. How laconic and brisk it is by the side of a page of the *North American Review*. Cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive; they walk and run. Moreover they who speak them have this elegance, that they do not trip in their speech. It is a shower of bullets, whilst Cambridge men and Yale men correct themselves and begin again at every half sentence.

I know nobody among my contemporaries except Carlyle who writes with any sinew and vivacity comparable to Plutarch and Montaigne. Yet always this profane swearing and bar-room wit has salt and fire in it. I cannot now read Webster's speeches. Fuller and Browne and Milton are quick, but the list is soon ended. Goethe seems to be well alive, no pedant. Luther too.

October 17 [1840]

Yesterday George and Sophia Ripley, Margaret Fuller and Alcott discussed here the Social Plans [Brook Farm]. I wished to be convinced, to be thawed, to be made nobly mad by the kindling before my eye of a new dawn of human piety. But this scheme was arithmetic and comfort: this was a hint borrowed from the Tremont House and the United States Hotel; a rage in our poverty and politics to live rich and gentlemanlike, an anchor to leeward against a change of weather; a prudent forecast on the probable issue of the great questions of Pauperism and Poverty. And not once could I be inflamed, but sat aloof and thoughtless; my voice faltered and fell. It was not the cave of persecution which is the palace of spiritual power, but only a room

in the Astor House hired for the Transcendentalists. I do not wish to remove from my present prison to a prison a little larger. I wish to break all prisons. I have not yet conquered my own house. It irks and repents me. Shall I raise the siege of this hencoop, and march baffled away to a pretended siege of Babylon? It seems to me that so to do were to dodge the problem I am set to solve, and to hide my impotency in the thick of a crowd. I can see too, afar,—that I should not find myself more than now,—no, not so much, in that select, but not by me selected, fraternity. Moreover, to join this body would be to traverse all my long trumpeted theory, and the instinct which spoke from it, that one man is a counterpoise to a city,—that a man is stronger than a city, that his solitude is more prevalent and beneficent than the concert of crowds.

January 31 [1841]

All my thoughts are foresters. I have scarce a day-dream on which the breath of the pines has not blown, and their shadows waved. Shall I not then call my little book *Forest Essays*?

March 20 [1842]

The *Dial* is to be sustained or ended, and I must settle the question, it seems, of its life or death. I wish it to live, but do not wish to be its life. Neither do I like to put it in the hands of the Humanity and Reform Men, because they trample on letters and poetry; nor in the hands of the Scholars, for they are dead and dry.

September 1 [1842]

I have so little vital force that I could not stand the dissipation of a flowing and friendly life; I should die of consumption in three months. But now I husband all my strength in this bachelor life I lead; no doubt shall be a well-preserved old gentleman.

November 26 [1842]

This old Bible, if you pitch it out of the window with a fork, it comes bounce back again.

March [1843]

It is not in the power of God to make a communication of his will to a Calvinist. For to every inward revelation he holds up his silly book, and quotes chapter and verse against the

Book-Maker and Man-Maker, against that which quotes not, but is and cometh. There is a light older than intellect, by which the intellect lives and works, always new, and which degrades every past and particular shining of itself. This light, Calvinism denies, in its idolatry of a certain past shining.

August 25 [1843]

Henry Thoreau sends me a paper with the old fault of unlimited contradiction. The trick of his rhetoric is soon learned: it consists in substituting for the obvious word and thought its diametrical antagonist. He praises wild mountains and winter forests for their domestic air; snow and ice for their warmth; villagers and wood-choppers for their urbanity, and the wilderness for resembling Rome and Paris. - - -

December 31 [1843]

We rail at trade, but the historian of the world will see that it was the principle of liberty; that it settled America, and destroyed feudalism, and made peace and keeps peace; that it will abolish slavery.

May [1845]

I avoid the Stygian anniversaries at Cambridge, those hurrahs among the ghosts, those yellow, bald, toothless meetings in memory of red cheeks, black hair, and departed health.

June [1845]

One who wishes to refresh himself by contact with the bone and sinew of society must avoid what is called the respectable portion of his city or neighborhood with as much care as in Europe a good traveller avoids American and English people.

March [1846]

I like man, but not men.

April [1847]

I believe in Omnipresence and find footsteps in grammar rules, in oyster shops, in church liturgies, in mathematics, and in solitudes and in galaxies. I am shamed out of my declamations against churches by the wonderful beauty of the English liturgy, an anthology of the piety of ages and nations.

August [1847]

The Superstitions of our Age:

The fear of Catholicism;

The fear of pauperism;

The fear of immigration;

The fear of manufacturing interests;

The fear of radicalism or democracy;

And faith in the steam engine.

LONDON, April [1848]

People here expect a revolution. There will be no revolution, none that deserves to be called so. There may be a scramble for money. But as all the people we see want the things we now have, and not better things, it is very certain that they will, under whatever change of forms, keep the old system. When I see changed men, I shall look for a changed world. Whoever is skilful in heaping money now will be skilful in heaping money again.

September 10 [1848]

George Sand is a great genius, and yet owes to her birth in France her entire freedom from the cant and snuffle of our dead Christianity.

January [1850]

Love is temporary and ends with marriage. Marriage is the perfection which love aimed at, ignorant of what it sought. Marriage is a good known only to the parties,—a relation of perfect understanding, aid, contentment, possession of themselves and of the world,—which dwarfs love to green fruit.

July [1853]

'Tis curious that Christianity, which is idealism, is sturdily defended by the brokers, and steadily attacked by the idealists.

August [1853]

If Socrates were here, we could go and talk with him; but Longfellow, we cannot go and talk with; there is a palace, and servants, and a row of bottles of different coloured wines, and wine glasses, and fine coats.

May [1854]

If Minerva offered me a gift and an option, I would say give me continuity. I am tired of scraps. I do not wish to be a literary or intellectual chiffonier. Away with this Jew's rag-bag of

ends and tufts of brocade, velvet, and cloth-of-gold; let me spin some yards or miles of helpful twine, a clew to lead to one kingly truth, a cord to bind wholesome and belonging facts.

5

July [1855]

--- if the women demand votes, offices, political equality, as an Elder and Elderess are of equal power in the Shaker Families, refuse it not. 'Tis very cheap wit that finds it so funny. Certainly all my points would be sooner carried in the state if women voted.

July [1855]

15 *Sleepy Hollow*. The blazing evidence of immortality is our dissatisfaction with any other solution.

April (?) [1859]

20 I have been writing and speaking what were once called novelties, for twenty-five or thirty years, and have not now one disciple. Why? Not that what I said was not true; not that it has not found intelligent receivers; but because it did not go from any wish in me to bring men to me, but to themselves. I delight in driving them from me. What could I do, if they came to me?—they would interrupt and encumber me. This is my boast that I have no school follower. I should account it a measure of the impurity of insight, if it did not create independence.

March [1862]

35 Why has never the poorest country college offered me a professorship of rhetoric? I think I could have taught an orator, though I am none.

CONCORD, February 13, 1865

40 Home from Chicago and Milwaukee. Chicago grows so fast that one ceases to respect civic growth: as if all these solid and stately squares which we are wont to see as the slow growth of a century had come to be done by machinery as cloth and hardware are made, and were therefore shoddy architecture without honour.

45 'Twas tedious, the squalor and obstructions of travel; the advantage of their offers at Chicago made it necessary to go; in short, this dragging of a decorous old gentleman out of home and out of position to this juvenile career was tantamount to this,—'I'll bet you fifty dollars a day that you will not leave your library, and wade

and ride and run and suffer all manner of indignities and stand up for an hour each night reading in a hall"; and I answered, "I'll bet I will." I do it and win the \$900.

November 5 [1865]

We hoped that in the peace, after such a war, a great expansion would follow in the mind of the Country; grand views in every direction,—true freedom in politics, in religion, in social science, in thought. But the energy of the nation seems to have expended itself in the war, and every interest is found as sectional and timorous as before. . . .

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHI
BETA KAPPA SOCIETY, AT CAMBRIDGE,
AUGUST 31, 1837

On July 29, 1837, Emerson wrote in his *Journals*:

"If the All-wise would give me light, I should write for the Cambridge men a theory of the Scholar's office. It is not all books which it behooves him to know, least of all to be a book-worshipper, but he must be able to read in all books that which alone gives value to books—in all to read one, the one incorruptible text of Truth."

In his life of Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks of the address as "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." "Nothing like it," he says, "had been heard in the halls of Harvard since Samuel Adams supported the affirmative of the question, 'Whether it be lawful to resist the chief magistrate, if the commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved.'" Lowell in his essay on Thoreau refers to the oration as "an event without any former parallel in our literary annals. . . . What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent!" Among those who disapproved was the Reverend John Pierce of the class of 1793, whose reaction was that of the orthodox older generation:

"Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave an oration, of 1¼ hour, on The American Scholar. It was to me in the misty, dreamy, unintelligible style of Swedenborg, Coleridge, and Carlyle. He professed to have method; but I could not trace it, except in his own annunciation. It was well spoken, and all seemed to attend, but how many were in my own predicament of making little of it I have no means of ascertaining.

Toward the close, and indeed in many parts of his discourse, he spoke severely of our dependence on British literature. Notwithstanding, I much question whether he himself would have written such an apparently incoherent and unintelligible address, had he not been familiar with the writings of the authors above named."

Bliss Perry's essay "Emerson's Most Famous Speech" (in *The Praise of Folly*) gives a vivid description of the occasion.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN, I greet you on the recommencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our contemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close.¹ The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

In this hope I accept the topic which not only usage but the nature of our association seem to prescribe to this day,—the AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Year by year we come up hither to read one

¹ In discussing "Europe and European Books" in the *Dial* for April, 1843, Emerson wrote: "Our eyes will be turned westward and a new and stronger tone of literature will result. The Kentucky stump-oratory, the exploits of Boone and David Crockett, the journals of western pioneers, agriculturalists, and socialists, and the letters of Jack Downing, are genuine growths which are sought with avidity in Europe, where our European-like books are of no value."

more chapter of his biography. Let us inquire what light new days and events have thrown on his character and his hopes.

It is one of those fables which out of an unknown antiquity convey an unlooked-for wisdom, that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man,—present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace all the other laborers. But, unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters,—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

In this view of him, as *Man Thinking*, the theory of his office is contained. Him Nature

solicits with all her placid, all her monitory pictures; him the past instructs; him the future invites. Is not indeed every man a student, and do not all things exist for the student's behoof? And, finally, is not the true scholar the only true master? But the old oracle said, "All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one." In life, too often, the scholar errs with mankind and forfeits his privilege. Let us see him in his school, and consider him in reference to the main influences he receives.

I. The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after the sunset, Night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing, beholding and beholden. The scholar is he of all men whom this spectacle most engages. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he never can find,—so entire, so boundless. Far too as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward without centre, without circumference,—in the mass and in the particle, Nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind. Classification begins. To the young mind every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running under ground whereby contrary and remote things cohere and flower out from one stem. It presently learns that since the dawn of history there has been a constant accumulation and classifying of facts. But what is classification but the perceiving that these objects are not chaotic, and are not foreign, but have a law which is also a law of the human mind? The astronomer discovers that geometry, a pure abstraction of the human mind, is the measure of planetary motion. The chemist finds proportions and intelligible method throughout matter; and science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts. The ambitious soul sits down before each refractory fact; one after another reduces all strange con-

stitutions, all new powers, to their class and their law, and goes on forever to animate the last fibre of organization, the outskirts of nature, by insight.

Thus to him, to this schoolboy under the bending dome of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And what is that root? Is not that the soul of his soul? A thought too bold; a dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures,—when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first groupings of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator. He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, the ancient precept, “Know thyself,” and the modern precept, “Study nature,” become at last one maxim.

II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past,—in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth,—learn the amount of this influence more conveniently,—by considering their value alone.

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry. It was a dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the dis-

tillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed, and as

yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his;—cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakespearized now for two hundred years.

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must,—when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining,—we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear, that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becometh fruitful."

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy,—with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our

surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had well-nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some pre-established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakespeare, only that least part,—only the authentic utterances of the oracle;—all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakespeare's.

Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never coun-

tervail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

III. There goes in the world a notion that the scholar should be a recluse, a valetudinarian,—as unfit for any handiwork, or public labor as a penknife for an axe.¹ The so-called “practical men” sneer at speculative men, as if, because they speculate or *see*, they could do nothing. I have heard it said that the clergy,—who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day, — are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchised; and indeed there are advocates for their celibacy. As far as this is true of the studious classes, it is not just and wise. Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not.

The world,—this shadow of the soul, or *other me*,—lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech. I pierce its order; I dissipate its fear; I dispose of it within the circuit of my expanding life. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare

any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action past by, as a loss of power. It is the raw material out of which the intellect moulds her splendid products. A strange process too, this by which experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours.

The actions and events of our childhood and youth are now matters of calmest observation. They lie like fair pictures in the air. Not so with our recent actions,—with the business which we now have in hand. On this we are quite unable to speculate. Our affections as yet circulate through it. We no more feel or know it than we feel the feet, or the hand, or the brain of our body. The new deed is yet a part of life,—remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour it detaches itself from the life like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly it is raised, transfigured; the corruptible has put on incorruption. Henceforth it is an object of beauty, however base its origin and neighborhood. Observe too the impossibility of antedating this act. In its grub state, it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the self-same thing unfurls beautiful wings, and is an angel of wisdom. So is there no fact, no event, in our private history, which shall not, sooner or later, lose its adhesive, inert form, and astonish us by soaring from our body into the empyrean. Cradle and infancy, school and playground, the fear of boys, and dogs, and ferules, the love of little maids and berries, and many another fact that once filled the whole sky, are gone already; friend and relative, profession and party, town and country, nation and world, must also soar and sing.

Of course, he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions has the richest return of wisdom. I will not shut myself out of this globe of action, and transplant an oak into a flower-pot, there to hunger and pine; nor trust the revenue of some single faculty, and exhaust one vein of thought, much like those Savoyards, who, getting their livelihood by carving shepherds, shepherdesses, and smoking Dutchmen, for all Europe, went out one day to the mountain to find

¹ Compare the passage in Emerson's journals written in March, 1845: “The only use which the country people can imagine of a scholar, the only compliment they can think of to pay him, is to ask him to deliver a Temperance Lecture, or to be a member of the School Committee.”

stock, and discovered that they had whittled up the last of their pine trees. Authors we have, in numbers, who have written out their vein, and who, moved by a commendable prudence, sail for Greece or Palestine, follow the trapper into the prairie, or ramble round Algiers, to replenish their merchantable stock.

If it were only for a vocabulary, the scholar would be covetous of action. Life is our dictionary. Years are well spent in country labors; in town; in the insight into trades and manufactures; in frank intercourse with many men and women; in science; in art; to the one end of mastering in all their facts a language by which to illustrate and embody our perceptions. I learn immediately from any speaker how much he has already lived, through the poverty or the splendor of his speech. Life lies behind us as the quarry from whence we get tiles and copestones for the masonry of to-day. This is the way to learn grammar. Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the work-yard made.

But the final value of action, like that of books, and better than books, is that it is a resource. That great principle of Undulation in nature, that shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the name of Polarity,—these “fits of easy transmission and reflection,” as Newton called them, are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.

The mind now thinks, now acts, and each fit reproduces the other. When the artist has exhausted his materials, when the fancy no longer paints, when thoughts are no longer apprehended and books are a weariness,—he has always the resource *to live*. Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ or medium to impart his truth? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them. This is a total act. Thinking is a partial act. Let the grandeur of justice shine in his affairs. Let the beauty of affection cheer his lowly roof. Those “far from fame,” who dwell and act with him, will feel the force of his constitution in the doings and passages of the day better than it can

be measured by any public and designed display. Time shall teach him that the scholar loses no hour which the man lives. Herein he unfolds the sacred germ of his instinct, screened from influence. What is lost in seemliness is gained in strength. Not out of those on whom systems of education have exhausted their culture, comes the helpful giant to destroy the old or to build the new, but out of unhandselled savage nature; out of terrible Druids and Berserkers come at last Alfred and Shakespeare.

I hear therefore with joy whatever is beginning to be said of the dignity and necessity of labor to every citizen. There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands. And labor is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.

I have now spoken of the education of the scholar by nature, by books, and by action. It remains to say somewhat of his duties.

They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in self-trust. The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. He plies the slow, unhonored, and unpaid task of observation. Flamsteed and Herschel, in their glazed observatories, may catalogue the stars with the praise of all men, and the results being splendid and useful, honor is sure. But he, in his private observatory, cataloguing obscure and nebulous stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such,—watching days and months sometimes for a few facts; correcting still his old records;—must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder him aside. Long he must stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept—how often!—poverty and solitude. For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and

self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. For all this loss and scorn, what offset? He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one who raises himself from private considerations and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history. Whatsoever oracles the human heart, in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions,—these he shall receive and impart. And whatsoever new verdict Reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day,—this he shall hear and promulgate.

These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach, and bide his own time,—happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone that this day he has seen something truly. Success treads on every right step. For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated. The poet, in utter solitude remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that which men in crowded cities find true for

them also. The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions, his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses, until he finds that he is the complement of his hearers;—that they drink his words because he fulfils for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this is myself.

In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, “without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution.” Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquillity, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption that like children and women his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin,—see the whelping of this lion,—which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it and pass on superior. The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance,—by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.

Yes, we are the cowed,—we the trustless. It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of his attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin, it is flint. They adapt themselves to it as they may; but in proportion as a man has any thing in him divine, the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the

world who give the color of their present thought to all nature and all art, and persuade men by the cheerful serenity of their carrying the matter, that this thing which they do is the apple which the ages have desired to pluck, now at last ripe, and inviting nations to the harvest. The great man makes the great thing. Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table. Linnæus makes botany the most alluring of studies, and wins it from the farmer and the herb-woman; Davy, chemistry; and Cuvier, fossils. The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon.

For this self-trust, the reason is deeper than can be fathomed,—darker than can be enlightened. I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. But I have already shown the ground of my hope, in adverting to the doctrine that man is one. I believe man has been wronged; he has wronged himself. He has almost lost the light that can lead him back to his prerogatives. Men are become of no account. Men in history, men in the world of to-day, are bugs, are spawn, and are called "the mass" and "the herd." In a century, in a millennium, one or two men; that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man. All the rest behold in the hero or the poet their own green and crude being,—ripened; yes, and are content to be less, so *that* may attain to its full stature. What a testimony, full of grandeur, full of pity, is borne to the demands of his own nature, by the poor clansman, the poor partisan, who rejoices in the glory of his chief. The poor and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified. They sun themselves in the great man's light, and feel it to be their own element. They cast the dignity of man from their downtrod selves upon the shoulders of a hero, and will perish to add one drop of blood to make that great heart beat, those giant sinews combat and conquer. He lives for us, and we live in him.

Men such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it is as good

as money,—the "spoils," so called, "of office." And why not? for they aspire to the highest, and this, in their sleep-walking, they dream is highest. Wake them and they shall quit the false good and leap to the true, and leave governments to clerks and desks. This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strewn along the ground. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy, more formidable to its enemy, more sweet and serene in its influence to its friend, than any kingdom in history. For a man, rightly viewed, comprehendeth the particular natures of all men. Each philosopher, each bard, each actor has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself. The books which once we valued more than the apple of the eye, we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on. First, one, then another, we drain all cisterns, and waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food. The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men.

But I have dwelt perhaps tediously upon this abstraction of the Scholar. I ought not to delay longer to add what I have to say of nearer reference to the time and to this country.

Historically, there is thought to be a difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age. With the views I have intimated of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, I do not much dwell on these differences. In fact, I believe each individual passes through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective. I deny not, how-

ever, that a revolution in the leading idea may be distinctly enough traced.

Our age is bewailed as the age of Introversion. Must that needs be evil? We, it seems, are critical; we are embarrassed with second thoughts; we cannot enjoy any thing for hankering to know whereof the pleasure consists; we are lined with eyes; we see with our feet; the time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness,—

Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

It is so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? I look upon the discontent of the literary class as a mere announcement of the fact that they find themselves not in the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim. If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with some joy of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign—is it not?—of new vigor when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I

explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body;—show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing;—and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

This idea has inspired the genius of Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, and, in a newer time, of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. This idea they have differently followed and with various success. In contrast with their writing, the style of Pope, of Johnson, of Gibbon, looks cold and pedantic. This writing is blood-warm. Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean. A man is related to all nature. This perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries. Goethe, in this very thing the most modern of the moderns, has shown us as none ever did, the genius of the ancients.

There is one man of genius who has done much for this philosophy of life, whose literary value has never yet been rightly estimated;—I mean Emanuel Swedenborg.² The most imaginative of men, yet writing with the precision of a mathematician, he endeavored to engraft a purely philosophical Ethics on the popular Christianity of his time. Such an attempt of course must have difficulty which no genius could surmount. But he saw and showed the connection between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the emblematic or spiritual character of the visible, audible, tangible world. Especially did his shade-loving muse hover over and interpret the lower parts of

² Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850) contains a lecture on "Swedenborg; or, The Mystic."

nature; he showed the mysterious bond that allies moral evil to the foul material forms, and has given in epical parables a theory of insanity, of beasts, of unclean and fearful things.

Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is the new importance given to the single person. Every thing that tends to insulate the individual,—to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state,—tends to true union as well as greatness. "I learned," said the melancholy Pestalozzi, "that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man." Help must come from the bosom alone. The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges. If there be one lesson more than another which should pierce his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all. Mr. President and Gentlemen, this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. There is no work for any but the decorous and the complaisant. Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience,—patience;

with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit;—not to be reckoned one character;—not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends,—please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of letters shall be no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE SENIOR CLASS IN
DIVINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, SUN-
DAY EVENING, JULY 15, 1838

The *Divinity School Address*, as it is usually called, was given on the invitation of the graduating class in the Divinity College at Harvard. The faculty, who had no part in the selection of the speaker, were displeased by the speech; but the students were more favorably impressed. The youthful Theodore Parker wrote in his journal: "I shall give no abstract, so beautiful, so just and terribly sublime was his picture of the church in its present condition. My soul is roused, and this week I shall write the long-meditated sermons on the state of the church and the duties of these times." Dr. Channing, the great Unitarian divine, so Elizabeth Peabody wrote, "regarded the address at Divinity Hall as an entirely justifiable and needed criticism on the perfunctory character of service creeping over the Unitarian churches at the time."

In general, however, the attitude of the ministry was distinctly unfavorable. The *Address* was a minor incident in a controversy, in which, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said in his life of Emerson, "Emerson had little more than the part of Patroclus when the Greeks and Trojans fought over his body." Writing in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Andrews Norton—one

of the "stern old war-gods" who "shook their heads"—attacked not only Emerson but also Shelley, Cousin, Carlyle, Martineau, and Schleiermacher. This "storm in our washbowl," as Emerson described it in a letter to Carlyle, had the effect of keeping him from being invited to speak at Harvard again for nearly thirty years.

Emerson's former colleague at the Second Church, Henry Ware, Jr., preached a sermon directed in part against the doctrine that "the soul knows no persons." Emerson, instead of formally replying to the sermon, wrote to Ware one of his most significant letters.

CONCORD, October 8, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—I ought sooner to have acknowledged your kind letter of last week, and the Sermon it accompanied. The letter was right manly and noble. The Sermon, too, I have read with attention. If it assails any doctrines of mine, perhaps I am not so quick to see it as writers generally,—certainly I did not feel any disposition to depart from my habitual contentment that you should say your thought, whilst I say mine.

I believe I must tell you what I think of my new position. It strikes me very oddly that good and wise men at Cambridge and Boston should think of raising me into an object of criticism. I have always been, from my very incapacity of methodical writing, "a chartered libertine," free to worship and free to rail; lucky when I could make myself understood, but never esteemed near enough to the institutions and mind of society to deserve the notice of the masters of literature and religion. I have appreciated fully the advantage of my position; for I well know that there is no scholar less willing or less able to be a polemic. I could not give account of myself, if challenged. I could not possibly give you one of the "arguments" you cruelly hint at, on which any doctrine of mine stands. For I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of a thought. I delight in telling what I think, but if you ask how I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men. I do not even see that either of these questions admits of an answer. So that, in the present droll posture of my affairs, when I see myself suddenly raised into the importance of a heretic, I am very uneasy when I advert to the supposed duties of such a personage, who is expected to make good his thesis against all comers.

I certainly shall do no such thing. I shall read what you and other good men write, as I have always done,—glad when you speak my thought, and skipping the page that has nothing for me. I shall go on, just as before, seeing whatever I can, and telling what I see; and, I suppose, with the same fortune that has hitherto attended me,—the joy of finding that my abler and better brothers, who work with

the sympathy of society, loving and beloved, do now and then unexpectedly confirm my perceptions, and find my nonsense is only their own thought in motley. And so I am

Your affectionate servant,

R. W. EMERSON.

See Emerson's poem "Uriel" (p. 402), which in the form of a celestial parable gives Emerson's reaction to the reception of the *Address*; and note the following sentence from his journal dated August 31, 1838: "One sees in the embittered acuteness of critics, snuffing heresy from afar, their own unbelief; and that they pour forth on the innocent promulgator of a new doctrine their anger at that which they vainly resist in their own bosoms."

In an article published in the *Boston Quarterly Review* for April, 1838, the Rev. Samuel D. Robbins—three or four months before the *Address*—had expressed thoughts similar to Emerson's in language somewhat like his. See Clarence Gohdes, "Some Remarks on Emerson's *Divinity School Address*," *American Literature*, I, 27-31 (March, 1929).

Emerson's address is very far from being out of date. As Frederic I. Carpenter remarks, "The issues are as vivid now as they were in 1838—the controversy being essentially that between the Modernists and the Fundamentalists."

With the opening paragraph of the *Address*, compare the two parts of the Nineteenth Psalm, beginning respectively, "The heavens declare the glory of God . . ." and, "The law of the Lord is perfect . . ."

In this refulgent summer, it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm-of-Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never-broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward has not yielded yet one word of explanation. One is constrained to respect the perfection of this world in which our senses converse. How wide; how rich; what invitation from every property it gives to every faculty of man! In its fruitful soils; in its navigable sea; in its mountains of metal and stone; in its for-

ests of all woods; in its animals; in its chemical ingredients; in the powers and path of light, heat, attraction and life, it is well worth the pith and heart of great men to subdue and enjoy it. The planters, the mechanics, the inventors, the astronomers, the builders of cities, and the captains, history delights to honor.

But when the mind opens and reveals the laws which traverse the universe and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched. Behold these outrunning laws, which our imperfect apprehension can see tend this way and that, but not come full circle. Behold these infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one. I would study, I would know, I would admire forever. These works of thought have been the entertainments of the human spirit in all ages.

A more secret, sweet, and overpowering beauty appears to man when his heart and mind open to the sentiment of virtue. Then he is instructed in what is above him. He learns that his being is without bound; that to the good, to the perfect, he is born, low as he now lies in evil and weakness. That which he venerates is still his own, though he has not realized it yet. *He ought*.¹ He knows the sense of that grand word, though his analysis fails to render account of it. When in innocency or when by intellectual perception he attains to say,—“I love the Right; Truth is beautiful within and without for evermore. Virtue, I am thine; save me; use me; thee will I serve, day and night, in great, in small, that I may be not virtuous, but virtue”;—then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased.

The sentiment of virtue is a reverence and delight in the presence of certain divine laws. It perceives that this homely game of life we play, covers, under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish. The child amidst his baubles is learning the action of light, motion, gravity, muscular force; and in the game of

human life, love, fear, justice, appetite, man, and God, interact. These laws refuse to be adequately stated. They will not be written out on paper, or spoken by the tongue. They elude our persevering thought; yet we read them hourly in each other's faces, in each other's actions, in our own remorse. The moral traits which are all globed into every virtuous act and thought,—in speech we must sever, and describe or suggest by painful enumeration of many particulars. Yet, as this sentiment is the essence of all religion, let me guide your eye to the precise objects of the sentiment, by an enumeration of some of those classes of facts in which this element is conspicuous.

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a noble deed is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed is by the action itself contracted. He who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice. If a man dissemble, deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being. A man in the view of absolute goodness, adores, with total humility. Every step so downward, is a step upward. The man who renounces himself, comes to himself.

See how this rapid intrinsic energy worketh everywhere, righting wrongs, correcting appearances, and bringing up facts to a harmony with thoughts. Its operation in life, though slow to the senses, is at last as sure as in the soul. By it a man is made the Providence to himself, dispensing good to his goodness, and evil to his sin. Character is always known. Thefts never enrich; alms never impoverish; murder will speak out of stone walls. The least admixture of a lie,—for example, the taint of vanity, any attempt to make a good impression, a favorable appearance,—will instantly vitiate the effect. But speak the truth, and all nature and all spirits help you with unexpected furtherance. Speak the truth, and all things alive or brute are vouchers, and the very roots of the grass underground there do seem to stir and move to bear

¹ Compare the following lines from Emerson's "Voluntaries":

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.

you witness. See again the perfection of the Law as it applies itself to the affections, and becomes the law of society. As we are, so we associate. The good, by affinity, seek the good; the vile, by affinity, the vile. Thus of their own volition, souls proceed into heaven, into hell.

These facts have always suggested to man the sublime creed that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will, of one mind; and that one mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool; and whatever opposes that will is everywhere balked and baffled, because things are made so, and not otherwise. Good is positive. Evil is merely privative, not absolute: it is like cold, which is the privation of heat.² All evil is so much death or nonentity. Benevolence is absolute and real. So much benevolence as a man hath, so much life hath he. For all things proceed out of this same spirit, which is differently named love, justice, temperance, and its different applications, just as the ocean receives different names on the several shores which it washes. All things proceed out of the same spirit, and all things conspire with it. Whilst a man seeks good ends, he is strong by the whole strength of nature. In so far as he roves from these ends, he bereaves himself of power, or auxiliaries; his being shrinks out of all remote channels, he becomes less and less, a mote, a point, until absolute badness is absolute death.

The perception of this law of laws awakens in the mind a sentiment which we call the religious sentiment, and which makes our highest happiness. Wonderful is its power to charm and to command. It is a mountain air. It is the embalmer of the world. It is myrrh and storax, and chlorine and rosemary. It makes the sky and the hills sublime, and the silent song of the stars is it. By it is the universe made safe and habitable, not by science or power. Thought may

² Emerson's attitude toward evil is generally regarded as the weakest point in his view of life. Cf. Schopenhauer's comment on Leibnitz's argument that evil is merely the absence of good as cold is the absence of heat:

"I know of no greater absurdity than that propounded by most systems of philosophy in declaring evil to be negative in its character. Evil is just what is positive; it makes its own existence felt. . . . It is the good which is negative: in other words, happiness and satisfaction always imply some desire fulfilled, some state of pain brought to an end."

work cold and intransitive in things, and find no end or unity; but the dawn of the sentiment of virtue on the heart, gives and is the assurance that Law is sovereign over all natures; and the worlds, time, space, eternity, do seem to break out into joy.

This sentiment is divine and deifying. It is the beatitude of man. It makes him illimitable. Through it, the soul first knows itself. It corrects the capital mistake of the infant man, who seeks to be great by following the great, and hopes to derive advantages *from another*,—by showing the fountain of all good to be in himself, and that he, equally with every man, is an inlet into the deeps of Reason. When he says, "I ought"; when love warms him; when he chooses, warned from on high, the good and great deed; then, deep melodies wander through his soul from Supreme Wisdom.—Then he can worship, and be enlarged by his worship; for he can never go behind this sentiment. In the sublimest flights of the soul, rectitude is never surmounted, love is never outgrown.

This sentiment lies at the foundation of society, and successively creates all forms of worship. The principle of veneration never dies out. Man fallen into superstition, into sensuality, is never quite without the visions of the moral sentiment. In like manner, all the expressions of this sentiment are sacred and permanent in proportion to their purity. The expressions of this sentiment affect us more than all other compositions. The sentences of the oldest time, which ejaculate this piety, are still fresh and fragrant. This thought dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China. Europe has always owed to oriental genius its divine impulses. What these holy bards said, all sane men found agreeable and true. And the unique impression of Jesus upon mankind, whose name is not so much written as ploughed into the history of this world, is proof of the subtle virtue of this infusion.

Meantime, whilst the doors of the temple stand open, day and night, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely: it is an intuition. It cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction,

but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find true in me, or reject; and on his word, or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing. On the contrary, the absence of this primary faith is the presence of degradation. As is the flood, so is the ebb. Let this faith depart, and the very words it spake and the things it made become false and hurtful. Then falls the church, the state, art, letters, life. The doctrine of the divine nature being forgotten, a sickness infects and dwarfs the constitution. Once man was all; now he is an appendage, a nuisance. And because the indwelling Supreme Spirit cannot wholly be got rid of, the doctrine of it suffers this perversion, that the divine nature is attributed to one or two persons, and denied to all the rest, and denied with fury. The doctrine of inspiration is lost; the base doctrine of the majority of voices usurps the place of the doctrine of the soul. Miracles, prophecy, poetry, the ideal of life, the holy life, exist as ancient history merely; they are not in the belief, nor in the aspiration of society; but, when suggested, seem ridiculous. Life is comic or pitiful as soon as the high ends of being fade out of sight, and man becomes near-sighted, and can only attend to what addresses the senses.

These general views, which, whilst they are general, none will contest, find abundant illustration in the history of religion, and especially in the history of the Christian church. In that, all of us have had our birth and nurture. The truth contained in that, you, my young friends, are now setting forth to teach. As the Cultus, or established worship of the civilized world, it has great historical interest for us. Of its blessed words, which have been the consolation of humanity, you need not that I should speak. I shall endeavor to discharge my duty to you on this occasion, by pointing out two errors in its administration, which daily appear more gross from the point of view we have just now taken.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his World. He said, in this jubilee of

sublime emotion, "I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! There is no doctrine of the Reason which will bear to be taught by the Understanding. The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said, in the next age, "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you, if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity became a Mythos, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt, before. He spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that man doth, and he knew that this daily miracle shines as the character ascends. But the word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain.

He felt respect for Moses and the prophets, but no unfit tenderness at postponing their initial revelations to the hour and the man that now is; to the eternal revelation in the heart. Thus was he a true man. Having seen that the law in us is commanding, he would not suffer it to be commanded. Boldly, with hand, and heart, and life, he declared it was God. Thus is he, as I think, the only soul in history who has appreciated the worth of man.

1. In this point of view we become sensible of the first defect of historical Christianity. Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for ages, it is not the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus. The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love. But by this eastern monarchy of a Christianity, which indolence and fear have built, the friend of man³ is made the injurer of man. The manner in which his name is surrounded with

³ When Elizabeth Peabody urged Emerson at least to put a Capital F to this phrase, Emerson answered, "If I did so, they would all go to sleep."

expressions which were once sallies of admiration and love, but are now petrified into official titles, kills all generous sympathy and liking. All who hear me, feel that the language that describes Christ to Europe and America is not the style of friendship and enthusiasm to a good and noble heart, but is appropriated and formal,—paints a demigod, as the Orientals or the Greeks would describe Osiris or Apollo. Accept the injurious impositions of our early catechetical instruction, and even honesty and self-denial were but splendid sins, if they did not wear the Christian name. One would rather be

A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,

than to be defrauded of his manly right in coming into nature and finding not names and places, not land and professions, but even virtue and truth foreclosed and monopolized. You shall not be a man even. You shall not own the world; you shall not dare and live after the infinite Law that is in you, and in company with the infinite Beauty which heaven and earth reflect to you in all lovely forms; but you must subordinate your nature to Christ's nature; you must accept our interpretations, and take his portrait as the vulgar draw it.

That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. There is no longer a necessary reason for my being. Already the long shadows of untimely oblivion creep over me, and I shall de cease forever.

The divine bards are the friends of my virtue, of my intellect, of my strength. They admonish me that the gleams which flash across my mind are not mine, but God's; that they had the like, and were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. So I love them. Noble provocations go out from them, inviting me to resist evil; to subdue the world; and to Be. And thus, by his holy thoughts, Jesus serves us, and thus only. To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul. A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be made by the reception of beautiful sentiments. It is true that a great and rich soul, like his, falling among the simple, does so preponderate, that, as his did, it names the world. The world seems to exist for him, and they have not yet drunk so deeply of his sense as to see that

only by coming again to themselves, or to God in themselves, can they grow forevermore. It is a low benefit to give me something; it is a high benefit to enable me to do somewhat of myself.

5 The time is coming when all men will see that the gift of God to the soul is not a vaunting, overpowering, excluding sanctity, but a sweet, natural goodness, a goodness like thine and mine, and that so invites thine and mine to be and to grow.

10 The injustice of the vulgar tone of preaching is not less flagrant to Jesus than to the souls which it profanes. The preachers do not see that they make his gospel not glad, and shear him of the locks of beauty and the attributes of heaven.
15 When I see a majestic Epaminondas, or Washington; when I see among my contemporaries a true orator, an upright judge, a dear friend; when I vibrate to the melody and fancy of a poem; I see beauty that is to be desired. And so
20 lovely, and yet with more entire consent of my human being, sounds in my ear the severe music of the bards that have sung of the true God in all ages. Now do not degrade the life and dialogues of Christ out of the circle of this charm,
25 by insulation and peculiarity. Let them lie as they befell, alive and warm, part of human life and of the landscape and of the cheerful day.

2. The second defect of the traditionary and
30 limited way of using the mind of Christ is a consequence of the first; this namely: that the Moral Nature, that Law of laws whose revelations introduce greatness—yea, God himself—into the open soul, is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society. Men
35 have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice.

It is very certain that it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul, to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love. If utterance is denied, the
40 thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer. Somehow his dream is told; somehow he publishes it with solemn joy: sometimes with pencil on canvas; sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles
45 of granite, his soul's worship is builded; sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent, in words.

The man enamored of this excellency becomes its priest or poet. The office is coeval with the world. But observe the condition, the spiritual limitation of the office. The spirit only can teach. Not any profane man, not any sensual, not any liar, not any slave can teach, but only he can give, who has; he only can create, who is. The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage, piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues. But the man who aims to speak as books enable, as synods use, as the fashion guides, and as interest commands, babbles. Let him hush.

To this holy office you propose to devote yourselves. I wish you may feel your call in throbs of desire and hope. The office is the first in the world. It is of that reality that it cannot suffer the deduction of any falsehood. And it is my duty to say to you that the need was never greater of new revelation than now. From the views I have already expressed, you will infer the sad conviction, which I share, I believe, with numbers, of the universal decay and now almost death of faith in society. The soul is not preached. The Church seems to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct. On this occasion, any complaisance would be criminal which told you, whose hope and commission it is to preach the faith of Christ, that the faith of Christ is preached.

It is time that this ill-suppressed murmur of all thoughtful men against the famine of our churches;—this moaning of the heart because it is bereaved of the consolation, the hope, the grandeur that come alone out of the culture of the moral nature,—should be heard through the sleep of indolence, and over the din of routine. This great and perpetual office of the preacher is not discharged. Preaching is the expression of the moral sentiment in application to the duties of life. In how many churches, by how many prophets, tell me, is a man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking forever the soul of God? Where now sounds the persuasion, that by its very melody imparadises my heart, and so affirms its own origin in heaven? Where shall I hear words such as in elder ages drew men to leave all and follow,—father and mother, house and land, wife and child? Where

shall I hear these august laws of moral being so pronounced as to fill my ear, and I feel ennobled by the offer of my uttermost action and passion? The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of nature control the activity of the hands,—so commanding that we find pleasure and honor in obeying. The faith should blend with the light of rising and of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the singing bird, and the breath of flowers. But now the priest's Sabbath has lost the splendor of nature; it is unlovely; we are glad when it is done; we can make, we do make, even sitting in our pews, a far better, holier, sweeter, for ourselves.

Whenever the pulpit is usurped by a formalist, then is the worshipper defrauded and disconsolate. We shrink as soon as the prayers begin, which do not uplift, but smite and offend us. We are fain to wrap our cloaks about us, and secure, as best we can, a solitude that hears not. I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say I would go to church no more. Men go, thought I, where they are wont to go, else had no soul entered the temple in the afternoon. A snow-storm was falling around us. The snow-storm was real, the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned. Not one fact in all his experience had he yet imported into his doctrine. This man had ploughed and planted and talked and bought and sold; he had read books; he had eaten and drunken; his head aches, his heart throbs; he smiles and suffers; yet was there not a surmise, a hint, in all the discourse, that he had ever lived at all. Not a line did he draw out of real history. The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to his people his life,—life passed through the fire of thought. But of the bad preacher, it could not be told from his sermon what age of the world he fell in; whether he had a father or a child; whether he was a freeholder or a pauper; whether he was a citizen or a countryman; or any other fact of

his biography. It seemed strange that the people should come to church. It seemed as if their houses were very unentertaining, that they should prefer this thoughtless clamor. It shows that there is a commanding attraction in the moral sentiment, that can lend a faint tint of light to dulness and ignorance coming in its name and place. The good hearer is sure he has been touched sometimes; is sure there is something to be reached, and some words that can reach it. When he listens to these vain words, he comforts himself by their relation to his remembrance of better hours, and so they clatter and echo unchallenged.

I am not ignorant that when we preach unworthily, it is not always quite in vain. There is a good ear, in some men, that draws supplies to virtue out of very indifferent nutriment. There is poetic truth concealed in all the common-places of prayer and of sermons, and though foolishly spoken, they may be wisely heard; for each is some select expression that broke out in a moment of piety from some stricken or jubilant soul, and its excellency made it remembered. The prayers and even the dogmas of our church are like the zodiac of Denderah and the astronomical monuments of the Hindoos, wholly insulated from anything now extant in the life and business of the people. They mark the height to which the waters once rose. But this docility is a check upon the mischief from the good and devout. In a large portion of the community, the religious service gives rise to quite other thoughts and emotions. We need not chide the negligent servant. We are struck with pity, rather, at the swift retribution of his sloth. Alas for the unhappy man that is called to stand in the pulpit, and *not* give bread of life. Everything that befalls, accuses him. Would he ask contributions for the missions, foreign or domestic? Instantly his face is suffused with shame, to propose to his parish that they should send money a hundred or a thousand miles, to furnish such poor fare as they have at home and would do well to go the hundred or the thousand miles to escape. Would he urge people to a godly way of living;—and can he ask a fellow-creature to come to Sabbath meetings, when he and they all know what is the poor uttermost they can hope for therein? Will he invite them privately to the Lord's Supper? He dares not. If no heart warm this rite, the hollow, dry, creaking formal-

ity is too plain, than that he can face a man of wit and energy and put the invitation without terror.⁴ In the street, what has he to say to the bold village blasphemer? The village blasphemer sees fear in the face, form, and gait of the minister.

Let me not taint the sincerity of this plea by any oversight of the claims of good men. I know and honor the purity and strict conscience of numbers of the clergy. What life the public worship retains, it owes to the scattered company of pious men, who minister here and there in the churches, and who, sometimes accepting with too great tenderness the tenet of the elders, have not accepted from others, but from their own heart, the genuine impulses of virtue, and so still command our love and awe, to the sanctity of character. Moreover, the exceptions are not so much to be found in a few eminent preachers, as in the better hours, the truer inspirations of all,—nay, in the sincere moments of every man. But, with whatever exception, it is still true that tradition characterizes the preaching of this country; that it comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul; that it aims at what is usual, and not at what is necessary and eternal; that thus historical Christianity destroys the power of preaching, by withdrawing it from the exploration of the moral nature of man; where the sublime is, where are the resources of astonishment and power. What a cruel injustice it is to that Law, the joy of the whole earth, which alone can make the thought dear and rich; that Law whose fatal sureness the astronomical orbits poorly emulate;—that it is travestied and depreciated, that it is behooted and behowled, and not a trait, not a word of it articulated. The pulpit in losing sight of this Law, loses its reason, and gropes after it knows not what. And for want of this culture the soul of the community is sick and faithless. It wants nothing so much as a stern, high, stoical, Christian discipline, to make it know itself and the divinity that speaks through it. Now man is ashamed of himself; he skulks and sneaks through the world, to be tolerated, to be pitied, and scarcely in a

⁴ Emerson had in 1832 given up his church because of a disagreement with his congregation in regard to the Lord's Supper, which, as his biographer Cabot states, "he found himself unable to regard as a sacrament, established by Christ, and in his name by the Church, for his followers in all ages."

thousand years does any man dare to be wise and good, and so draw after him the tears and blessings of his kind.

Certainly there have been periods when, from the inactivity of the intellect on certain truths, a greater faith was possible in names and persons. The Puritans in England and America found in the Christ of the Catholic Church and in the dogmas inherited from Rome, scope for their austere piety and their longings for civil freedom. But their creed is passing away, and none arises in its room. I think no man can go with his thoughts about him into one of our churches, without feeling that what hold the public worship had on men is gone, or going. It has lost its grasp on the affection of the good and the fear of the bad. In the country, neighborhoods, half parishes are *signing off*, to use the local term. It is already beginning to indicate character and religion to withdraw from the religious meetings. I have heard a devout person, who prized the Sabbath, say in bitterness of heart, "On Sundays, it seems wicked to go to church."⁵ And the motive that holds the best there is now only a hope and a waiting. What was once a mere circumstance, that the best and the worst men in the parish, the poor and the rich, the learned and the ignorant, young and old, should meet one day as fellows in one house, in sign of an equal right in the soul, has come to be a paramount motive for going thither.

My friends, in these two errors, I think, I find the causes of a decaying church and a wasting unbelief. And what greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate or the market. Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honor. Society lives to trifles, and when men die we do not mention them.

And now, my brothers, you will ask, What in these desponding days can be done by us? The remedy is already declared in the ground of our complaint of the Church. We have contrasted the Church with the Soul. In the soul then let the redemption be sought. Wherever a man comes, there comes revolution. The old is for slaves. When a man comes, all books are legible,

⁵ Emerson wrote in his journal, December 8, 1837: "Lidian [Mrs. Emerson] says, it is wicked to go to church Sundays."

all things transparent, all religions are forms. He is religious. Man is the wonderworker. He is seen amid miracles. All men bless and curse. He saith yea and nay, only. The stationariness of religion; the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed; the fear of degrading the character of Jesus by representing him as a man;—indicate with sufficient clearness the falsehood of our theology. It is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake. The true Christianity,—a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of man,—is lost. None believeth in the soul of man, but only in some man or person old and departed. Ah me! no man goeth alone. All men go in flocks to this saint or that poet, avoiding the God who seeth in secret. They cannot see in secret; they love to be blind in public. They think society wiser than their soul, and know not that one soul, and their soul, is wiser than the whole word. See how nations and races flit by on the sea of time and leave no ripple to tell where they floated or sunk, and one good soul shall make the name of Moses, or of Zeno, or of Zoroaster, reverend forever. None assayeth the stern ambition to be the Self of the nation and of nature, but each would be an easy secondary to some Christian scheme, or sectarian connection, or some eminent man. Once leave your own knowledge of God, your own sentiment, and take secondary knowledge, as St. Paul's, or George Fox's, or Swedenborg's, and you get wide from God with every year this secondary form lasts, and if, as now, for centuries,—the chasm yawns to that breadth, that men can scarcely be convinced there is in them anything divine.

Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred to the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil. Friends enough you shall find who will hold up to your emulation Wesleys and Oberlins, Saints and Prophets. Thank God for these good men, but say, "I also am a man." Imitation cannot go above its model. The imitator dooms himself to hopeless mediocrity. The inventor did it because it was natural to him, and so in him it has a charm. In the imitator something else is natural, and he bereaves himself of his own beauty, to come short of another man's.

Yourself a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint

men at first hand with Deity. Look to it first and only, that fashion, custom, authority, pleasure, and money, are nothing to you,—are not bandages over your eyes, that you cannot see,—but live with the privilege of the immeasurable mind. Not too anxious to visit periodically all families and each family in your parish connection,—when you meet one of these men or women, be to them a divine man; be to them thought and virtue; let their timid aspirations find in you a friend; let their trampled instincts be genially tempted out in your atmosphere; let their doubts know that you have doubted, and their wonder feel that you have wondered. By trusting your own heart, you shall gain more confidence in other men. For all our penny-wisdom, for all our soul-destroying slavery to habit, it is not to be doubted that all men have sublime thoughts; that all men value the few real hours of life; they love to be heard; they love to be caught up into the vision of principles. We mark with light in the memory the few interviews we have had, in the dreary years of routine and of sin, with souls that made our souls wiser; that spoke what we thought; that told us what we knew; that gave us leave to be what we inly were. Discharge to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you shall be followed with their love as by an angel.

And, to this end, let us not aim at common degrees of merit. Can we not leave, to such as love it, the virtue that glitters for the commendation of society, and ourselves pierce the deep solitudes of absolute ability and worth? We easily come up to the standard of goodness in society. Society's praise can be cheaply secured, and almost all men are content with those easy merits; but the instant effect of conversing with God will be to put them away. There are persons who are not actors, not speakers, but influences; persons too great for fame, for display; who disdain eloquence; to whom all we call art and artist, seems too nearly allied to show and by-ends, to the exaggeration of the finite and selfish, and loss of the universal. The orators, the poets, the commanders encroach on us only as fair women do, by our allowance and homage. Slight them by preoccupation of mind, slight them, as you can well afford to do, by high and universal aims, and they instantly feel that you have right, and that it is in lower places that they must shine. They also feel your right; for they with you are

open to the influx of the all-knowing Spirit, which annihilates before its broad noon the little shades and gradations of intelligence in the compositions we call wiser and wisest.

5 In such high communion let us study the grand strokes of rectitude: a bold benevolence, an independence of friends, so that not the unjust wishes of those who love us shall impair our freedom, but we shall resist for truth's sake the freest flow of kindness, and appeal to sympathies far in advance; and—what is the highest form in which we know this beautiful element,—a certain solidity of merit, that has nothing to do with opinion, and which is so essentially and manifestly virtue, that it is taken for granted that the right, the brave, the generous step will be taken by it, and nobody thinks of commending it. You would compliment a coxcomb doing a good act, but you would not praise an angel. 10 The silence that accepts merit as the most natural thing in the world, is the highest applause. Such souls, when they appear, are the Imperial Guard of Virtue, the perpetual reserve, the dictators of fortune. One needs not praise their courage,—they are the heart and soul of nature. 15 O my friends, there are resources in us on which we have not drawn. There are men who rise refreshed on hearing a threat; men to whom a crisis which intimidates and paralyzes the majority,—demanding not the faculties of prudence and thrift, but comprehension, immovableness, the readiness of sacrifice,—comes graceful and beloved as a bride. Napoleon said of Massena, that he was not himself until the battle began to go against him; then, when the dead began 20 to fall in ranks around him, awoke his powers of combination, and he put on terror and victory as a robe. So it is in rugged crises, in unweariable endurance, and in aims which put sympathy out of the question, that the angel is shown. But these are heights that we can scarce remember and look up to without contrition and shame. Let us thank God that such things exist.

And now let us do what we can to rekindle the smouldering, nigh quenched fire on the altar. The evils of the church that now is manifest. The question returns, What shall we do? I confess, all attempts to project and establish a Cultus with new rites and forms, seem to me vain. Faith 45 makes us, and not we it, and faith makes its own forms. All attempts to contrive a system are as cold as the new worship introduced by the

French to the goddess of Reason,—to-day, paste-board and filigree, and ending to-morrow in madness and murder. Rather let the breath of new life be breathed by you through the forms already existing. For if once you are alive, you shall find they shall become plastic and new. The remedy to their deformity is first, soul, and second, soul, and evermore, soul. A whole pope-dom of forms one pulsation of virtue can uplift and vivify. Two inestimable advantages Christianity has given us; first the Sabbath, the jubilee of the whole world, whose light dawns welcome alike into the closet of the philosopher, into the garret of toil, and into prison-cells, and everywhere suggests, even to the vile, the dignity of spiritual being. Let it stand forevermore, a temple, which new love, new faith, new sight shall restore to more than its first splendor to mankind. And secondly, the institution of preaching,—the speech of man to man,—essentially the most flexible of all organs, of all forms. What hinders that now, everywhere, in pulpits, in lecture-rooms, in houses, in fields, wherever the invitation of men or your own occasions lead you, you speak the very truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelation?

I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the souls of those Eastern men, and chiefly of those Hebrews, and through their lips spoke oracles to all time, shall speak in the West also. The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures contain immortal sentences, that have been bread of life to millions. But they have no epical integrity; are fragmentary; are not shown in their order to the intellect. I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy.

SELF-RELIANCE

(1841)

The essay appeared in Emerson's first series of *Essays* (1841), Edward W. Emerson remarks: "In reading this essay, it is well to call to mind, 1st, Mr.

Emerson's fear of weakening the effect of his presentation by qualification; 2d, That the Self he refers to is the higher self, man's share of divinity. Hence 'The Over-Soul' should be read after 'Self-Reliance.' " The connection between the ideas set forth in these two essays is suggested by Emerson's statement—in an address delivered before the Anti-Slavery Society in New York, March 7, 1854—that one comes at last to learn "that self-reliance, the height and perfection of man, is reliance on God."

*"Ne te quæsieris extra."*¹

*Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.*

Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's
Honest Man's Fortune.

*Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet.*

I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter² which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-

¹ Do not look outside thyself.

² Probably Washington Allston, who was a poet as well as a painter.

humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without preëstablished harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no intention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind,

that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence,—must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to sur-

render the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a non-conformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested,—“But these impulses may be from below, not from above.” I replied, “They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil’s child, I will live then from the Devil.” No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, “Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.” Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the

day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the

great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base house-keepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from all your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean the "foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers, and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do.³ He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak

³ Compare Walt Whitman in "Song of Myself":

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.—“Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.”—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this.

What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, every body in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio,

Milton called "the height of Rome"; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, "Who are you, Sir?" Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable⁴ of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderbeg and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great

proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command

⁴ Perhaps Emerson refers to the opening portion of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul! Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say "I think," "I am," but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the

full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast

spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes*; for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sacrificing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books

and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, climate, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say,—“Come out unto us.” But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. “What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love.”

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, “O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife,—but these relations I must fill after a new and

unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last."—But so may you give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*, or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat and dog—whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple

purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our acts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not "studying a profession," for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him;—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance

must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's "Bonduca," when admonished to inquire the mind of the God Audate, replies,—

*"His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
Our valors are our best gods."*

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance; it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating everything to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and not for a speedy exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see,—how you can see; "It must be somehow that you stole the light from us." They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young, and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an

axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love

the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shall reproduce the Fore-world again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances.⁵ It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes

⁵ The paragraphs which follow might have come from the essay on "Compensation." The doctrine of compensation, which is closely akin to fatalism, would lead more logically to the pessimism of Mark Twain than to the optimism of Emerson. In his *Mark Twain*, III, 1469, A. B. Paine quotes Clemens:

"From everlasting to everlasting, this is the law: the sum of wrong & misery shall always keep exact step with the sum of human blessedness.

"No 'civilization,' 'no advance,' has ever modified these proportions by even the shadow of a shade, nor ever can, while our race endures."

continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad-axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity, entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the

improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Cases, "without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries, and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill and bake his bread himself."

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned, and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire; and what the man acquires, is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or

portion of life," said the Caliph Ali, "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shall sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE
FLOWER?

(1834; 1839)

5 Cf. the following sentences from the section on Beauty in Emerson's *Nature* (1836): "This element [Beauty] I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe." Cf. also the following sentence from his essay on "The Poet": "For the world is not painted, or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe."

15 Emerson's conception of beauty and art is to be sharply distinguished from that of Poe, who although he might perhaps have written the line,

"Then Beauty is its own excuse for being,"

20 would not have meant what Emerson had in mind. Cf. *Nature*: "The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its [Beauty's] perfection. . . . Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue."

25 In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,

30 Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.

Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why

35 This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,¹
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,

Then beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!

40 I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there
brought you.

EACH AND ALL

(1834? 1839)

On May 16, 1834, Emerson wrote in his journal:
"I remember when I was a boy going upon the

50 ¹ Compare Gray's well-known lines:

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

beach and being charmed with the colors and forms of the shells. I picked up many and put them in my pocket. When I got home I could find nothing that I gathered—nothing but some dry, ugly mussel and snail shells. Thence I learned that Composition was more important than the beauty of individual forms to Effect.”

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, "I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth":—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;

Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;—
5 Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

CONCORD HYMN

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE
MONUMENT, JULY 4, 1837

(1837; 1837)

In the *Selected Poems* (1876) of Emerson this poem—originally sung to the tune of Old Hundred—bears the title, "Concord Fight." It should be compared with Bryant's "The Battle-Field" and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." Few productions written for special occasions have the permanent qualities of Emerson's hymn or Lincoln's brief speech.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
25 And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
30 Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
35 When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
40 The shaft we raise to them and thee.

THE HUMBLE-BEE

(1837; 1839)

On May 9, 1837, Emerson wrote in his journal: "Yesterday in the woods I followed the fine humble-bee with rhymes and fancies fine."

50 Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,

Far-off heats through seas to seek;
 I will follow thee alone,
 Thou animated torrid-zone!
 Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
 Let me chase thy waving lines;
 Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
 Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
 Joy of thy dominion!
 Sailor of the atmosphere;
 Swimmer through the waves of air;
 Voyager of light and noon;
 Epicurean of June;
 Wait, I prithee, till I come
 Within earshot of thy hum,—
 All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
 With a net of shining haze
 Silvers the horizon wall,
 And with softness touching all,
 Tints the human countenance
 With a color of romance,
 And infusing subtle heats,
 Turns the sod to violets,
 Thou, in sunny solitudes,
 Rover of the underwoods,
 The green silence dost displace
 With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
 Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
 Tells of countless sunny hours,
 Long days, and solid banks of flowers
 Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
 In Indian wildernesses found;
 Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
 Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
 Hath my insect never seen;
 But violets and bilberry bells,
 Maple-sap and daffodils,
 Grass with green flag half-mast high,
 Succory to match the sky,
 Columbine with horn of honey,
 Scented fern, and agrimony,
 Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue
 And brier-roses, dwelt among;
 All beside was unknown waste,
 All was picture as he passed.

• 402 •

Wiser far than human seer,
 Yellow-breeched philosopher!
 Seeing only what is fair,
 Sipping only what is sweet,
 5 Thou dost mock at fate and care,
 Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
 When the fierce northwestern blast
 Cools sea and land so far and fast,
 Thou already slumberest deep;
 10 Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
 Want and woe, which torture us,
 Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

URIEL

(1838; 1846)

20 "The poem," writes Edward W. Emerson, "when read with the history of the Divinity School Address, and its consequences, in mind, is seen to be an account of that event generalized and sublimed,—the announcement of an advance in truth, won not without pain and struggle, to hearers not yet ready,
 25 resulting in banishment to the prophet; yet the spoken word sticks like a barbed arrow, or works like a leaven." For Uriel, the archangel of the Sun, see Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book III, lines 622 ff.

30 It fell in the ancient periods
 Which the brooding soul surveys,
 Or ever the wild Time coined itself
 Into calendar months and days.

35 This was the lapse of Uriel,
 Which in Paradise befell.
 Once, among the Pleiads walking,
 Seyd overheard the young gods talking;
 And the treason, too long pent,
 40 To his ears was evident.

The young deities discussed
 Laws of form, and metre just,
 Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,
 What subsisteth and what seems.
 45 One, with low tones that decide,
 And doubt and reverend use defied,
 With a look that solved the sphere,
 And stirred the devils everywhere,
 Gave his sentiment divine
 50 Against the being of a line.
 "Line in nature is not found;
 Unit and universe are round;

In vain produced, all rays return;
 Evil will bless, and ice will burn."
 As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,
 A shudder ran around the sky;
 The stern old war-gods shook their heads,
 The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds;
 Seemed to the holy festival
 The rash word boded ill to all;
 The balance-beam of Fate was bent;
 The bounds of good and ill were rent;
 Strong Hades could not keep his own,
 But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell
 On the beauty of Uriel;
 In heaven once eminent, the god
 Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud;
 Whether doomed to long gyration
 In the sea of generation,
 Or by knowledge grown too bright
 To hit the nerve of feebler sight.
 Straightway, a forgetting wind
 Stole over the celestial kind,
 And their lips the secret kept,
 If in ashes the fire-seed slept.
 But now and then, truth-speaking things
 Shamed the angels' veiling wings;
 And, shrilling from the solar course,
 Or from fruit of chemic force,
 Procession of a soul in matter,
 Or the speeding change of water,
 Or out of the good of evil born,
 Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,
 And a blush tinged the upper sky,
 And the gods shook, they knew not why.

THE PROBLEM

(1839; 1840)

This poem, which Emerson first named "The Priest," reveals the nonconformist in an unusual mood. Cf. the two following entries in the *Journals*: "It is very grateful to my feelings to go into a Roman Cathedral, yet I look as my countrymen do at the Roman priesthood. It is very grateful to me to go into an English Church and hear the liturgy read, yet nothing would induce me to be the English priest" (1838) and "I believe in Omnipresence and find foot-steps in grammar rules, in oyster shops, in church liturgies, in mathematics, and in solitudes and in

galaxies. I am shamed out of my declamations against churches by the wonderful beauty of the English liturgy, an anthology of the piety of ages and nations" (1847). Cf. also Emerson's essay on Art: "The reference of all production at last to an Aboriginal Power explains the traits common to all works of the highest art,—that they are universally intelligible, that they restore to us the simplest states of mind, and are religious. . . . In happy hours nature appears to us one with art; art perfected,—the work of genius."

10 I like a church; I like a cowl;
 I love a prophet of the soul;
 And on my heart monastic aisles
 Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;
 15 Yet not for all his faith can see
 Would I that cowl'd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,
 Which I could not on me endure?
 20 Not from a vain or shallow thought
 His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
 Never from lips of cunning fell
 The thrilling Delphic oracle;
 25 Out from the heart of nature rolled
 The burdens of the Bible old;
 The litanies of nations came,
 Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
 Up from the burning core below,—
 30 The canticles of love and woe:
 The hand that rounded Peter's dome
 And groined the aisles of Christian Rome
 Wrought in a sad sincerity;
 Himself from God he could not free;
 35 He builded better than he knew;—
 The conscious stone to beauty grew.¹

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
 Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
 40 Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
 Painting with morn each annual cell?
 Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
 To her old leaves new myriads?
 Such and so grew these holy piles,
 45 Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
 Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,

¹ Cf. the essay on "Poetry and Imagination" in Emerson's *Letters and Social Aims*: "Michael Angelo is largely filled with the Creator that made and makes men. . . . In him and the like perfecter brains the instinct is resistless, knows the right way, is melodious, and at all points divine."

As the best gem upon her zone,
 And Morning opes with haste her lids
 To gaze upon the Pyramids;
 O'er England's abbeyes bends the sky,
 As on its friends, with kindred eye;
 For out of Thought's interior sphere
 These wonders rose to upper air;
 And Nature gladly gave them place,
 Adopted them into her race,
 And granted them an equal date
 With Andes and with Ararat.²
 These temples grew as grows the grass;
 Art might obey, but not surpass.
 The passive Master lent his hand
 To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
 And the same power that reared the shrine
 Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
 Ever the fiery Pentecost
 Girds with one flame the countless host,
 Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
 And through the priest the mind inspires.
 The word unto the prophet spoken
 Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
 The word by seers or sibyls told,
 In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
 Still floats upon the morning wind,
 Still whispers to the willing mind.
 One accent of the Holy Ghost
 The heedless world hath never lost.
 I know what say the fathers wise,—
 The Book itself before me lies,
 Old *Chrysostom*,³ best Augustine,
 And he who blent both in his line,
 The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
 Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.
 His words are music in my ear,
 I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
 And yet, for all his faith could see,
 I would not the good bishop be.

² "... 'The Problem' with its magnificent restatement of the character of the creative process and the passage from 'Not from a vain or shallow thought' to 'With Andes and with Ararat' which, to speak on the manner of the old-fashioned critic, is probably the high-water mark of American poetry prior to the work of the present generation" (Ludwig Lewisohn, *Expression in America*, pp. 133-134).

³ On account of his eloquence John of Antioch (347-407) was called Chrysostom, which means Golden Mouth or Golden Lips. Emerson applies the latter term to Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), author of *Holy Living and Holy Dying*.

WOODNOTES, I

(1840)

- 5 1
 When the pine tosses its cones
 To the song of its waterfall tones,
 Who speeds to the woodland walks?
 To birds and trees who talks?
 10 Cæsar of his leafy Rome,
 There the poet is at home.
 He goes to the river-side,—
 Not hook nor line hath he;
 He stands in the meadows wide,—
 15 Nor gun nor scythe to see.
 Sure some god his eye enchants:
 What he knows nobody wants.
 In the wood he travels glad,
 Without better fortune had,
 20 Melancholy without bad.
 Knowledge this man prizes best
 Seems fantastic to the rest:
 Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,
 Grass-buds and caterpillar-shrouds,
 25 Boughs on which the wild bees settle,
 Tints that spot the violet's petal,
 Why Nature loves the number five,
 And why the star-form she repeats:
 Lover of all things alive,
 30 Wonderer at all he meets,
 Wonderer chiefly at himself,
 Who can tell him what he is?
 Or how meet in human elf
 Coming and past eternities?

- 35 2
 And such I knew, a forest seer,
 A minstrel of the natural year,
 Foreteller of the vernal ides,
 40 Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,
 A lover true, who knew by heart
 Each joy the mountain dales impart;
 It seemed that Nature could not raise
 A plant in any secret place,
 45 In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
 Beneath the grass that shades the rill,
 Under the snow, between the rocks,
 In damp fields known to bird and fox,
 But he would come in the very hour
 50 It opened in its virgin bower,
 As if a sunbeam showed the place,
 And tell its long-descended race.

It seemed as if the breezes brought him,
 It seemed as if the sparrows taught him;
 As if by secret sight he knew
 Where, in far fields, the orchis grew.
 Many haps fall in the field
 Seldom seen by wishful eyes,
 But all her shows did Nature yield,
 To please and win this pilgrim wise.
 He saw the partridge drum in the woods;
 He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;
 He found the tawny thrushes' broods;
 And the shy hawk did wait for him;
 What others did at distance hear,
 And guessed within the thicket's gloom,
 Was shown to this philosopher,
 And at his bidding seemed to come.¹

3

In unploughed Maine he sought the lumberers'
 gang
 Where from a hundred lakes young rivers
 sprang;
 He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon
 The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone;
 Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly bear,
 And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.
 He saw beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,
 The slight Linnæa hang its twin-born heads,
 And blessed the monument of the man of
 flowers,
 Which breathes his sweet fame through the
 northern bowers.
 He heard, when in the grove, at intervals,
 With sudden roar the aged pine-tree falls,—
 One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect tree,
 Declares the close of its green century.
 Low lies the plant to whose creation went
 Sweet influence from every element;
 Whose living towers the years conspired to build,
 Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild.
 Through these green tents, by eldest Nature
 dressed,
 He roamed, content alike with man and beast.
 Where darkness found him he lay glad at night;
 There the red morning touched him with its
 light.
 Three moons his great heart him a hermit made,
 So long he roved at will the boundless shade.

¹ The second section of the poem would serve as an excellent description of Henry David Thoreau, but it is not certain that the poem was written after Emerson had become acquainted with Thoreau.

The timid it concerns to ask their way,
 And fear what foe in caves and swamps can stray,
 To make no step until the event is known,
 And ills to come as evils past bemoan.

- 5 Not so the wise; no coward watch he keeps
 To spy what danger on his pathway creeps;
 Go where he will, the wise man is at home,
 His hearth the earth,—his hall the azure dome;
 Where his clear spirit leads him, there's his road
 10 By God's own light illumined and foreshowed.

4

- 'Twas one of the charmed days
 When the genius of God doth flow;
 15 The wind may alter twenty ways,
 A tempest cannot blow;
 It may blow north, it still is warm;
 Or south, it still is clear;
 Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;
 20 Or west, no thunder fear.
 The musing peasant, lowly great,
 Beside the forest water sate;
 The rope-like pine-roots crosswise grown
 Composed the network of his throne;
 25 The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,
 Was burnished to a floor of glass,
 Painted with shadows green and proud
 Of the tree and of the cloud.
 He was the heart of all the scene;
 30 On him the sun looked more serene;
 To hill and cloud his face was known,—
 It seemed the likeness of their own;
 They knew by secret sympathy
 The public child of earth and sky.
 35 "You ask," he said, "what guide
 Me through trackless thickets led,
 Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough and
 wide,
 I found the water's bed.
 40 The watercourses were my guide;
 I travelled grateful by their side,
 Or through their channel dry;
 They led me through the thicket damp,
 Through brake and fern, the beavers' camp,
 45 Through beds of granite cut my road,
 And their resistless friendship showed.
 The falling waters led me,
 The foodful waters fed me,
 And brought me to the lowest land,
 50 Unerring to the ocean sand.
 The moss upon the forest bark
 Was pole-star when the night was dark;

The purple berries in the wood
 Supplied me necessary food;
 For Nature ever faithful is
 To such as trust her faithfulness.
 When the forest shall mislead me,
 When the night and morning lie,
 When sea and land refuse to feed me,
 'Twill be time enough to die;
 Then will yet my mother yield
 A pillow in her greenest field,
 Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
 The clay of their departed lover."

FRIENDSHIP

(1841)

This poem is the motto which Emerson prefixed to his essay on "Friendship" in *Essays, First Series*.

A ruddy drop of manly blood
 The surging sea outweighs,
 The world uncertain comes and goes;
 The lover rooted stays.
 I fancied he was fled,—
 And, after many a year,
 Glowed unexhausted kindness,
 Like daily sunrise there.
 My careful heart was free again,
 O friend, my bosom said,
 Through thee alone the sky is arched,
 Through thee the rose is red;
 All things through thee take nobler form,
 And look beyond the earth,
 The mill-round of our fate appears
 A sun-path in thy worth.
 Me too thy nobleness has taught
 To master my despair;
 The fountains of my hidden life
 Are through thy friendship fair.

THE SNOW-STORM

(1841)

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
 Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
 Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
 Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
 And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
 The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
 Delayed, all friends shut out, the house-mates sit
 Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
 In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
 Out of an unseen quarry evermore
 Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
 Curves his white bastions with projected roof
 5 Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
 Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
 So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
 For number or proportion. Mockingly,
 On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
 10 A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
 Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
 Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
 A tapering turret overtops the work.
 And when his hours are numbered, and the
 15 world
 Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
 Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
 To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
 Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
 20 The frolic architecture of the snow.

FABLE

(1846)

25 The mountain and the squirrel
 Had a quarrel,
 And the former called the latter "Little Prig";
 Bun replied,
 30 "You are doubtless very big;
 But all sorts of things and weather
 Must be taken in together,
 To make up a year
 And a sphere.
 35 And I think it no disgrace
 To occupy my place.
 If I'm not so large as you,
 You are not so small as I,
 And not half so spry.
 40 I'll not deny you make
 A very pretty squirrel track;
 Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
 If I cannot carry forests on my back,
 45 Neither can you crack a nut."

THRENODY

(1846)

The subject of this elegy is Emerson's little son
 Waldo, who died in January, 1842. Soon afterwards
 Emerson wrote to Carlyle: "My son, a perfect little

boy of five years and three months, has ended his earthly life. You can never sympathize with me; you can never know how much of me such a young child can take away. A few weeks ago I accounted myself a very rich man, and now the poorest of all. . . . From a perfect health and as happy influences as ever child enjoyed, he was hurried out of my arms in three short days by scarlatina. . . . I dare not fathom the Invisible and Untold to inquire what relations to my Departed ones I yet sustain." The latter portion of the poem, beginning with line 176,

The deep Heart answered, "Weepest thou? . . ."

was not written, says Edward W. Emerson, "until Time and Thought had brought their healing."

The South-wind brings
Life, sunshine and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
Breathes aromatic fire;
But over the dead he has no power,
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;
And, looking over the hills, I mourn
The darling who shall not return.

I see my empty house,
I see my trees repair their boughs;
And he, the wondrous child,
Whose silver warble wild
Outvalued every pulsing sound
Within the air's cerulean round,—
The hyacinthine boy, for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom,
The gracious boy, who did adorn
The world whereinto he was born,
And by his countenance repay
The favor of the loving Day,—
Has disappeared from the Day's eye;
Far and wide she cannot find him;
My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.
Returned this day, the South-wind searches,
And finds young pines and budding birches;
But finds not the budding man;
Nature, who lost, cannot remake him;
Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him;
Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.

And whither now, my truant wise and sweet,
O, whither tend thy feet?
I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know:
How have I forfeited the right?
Hast thou forgot me in a new delight?

I hearken for thy household cheer,
O eloquent child!
Whose voice, an equal messenger,
Conveyed thy meaning mild.
5 What though the pains and joys
Whereof it spoke were toys
Fitting his age and ken,
Yet fairest dames and bearded men,
Who heard the sweet request,
10 So gentle, wise and grave,
Bended with joy to his behest
And let the world's affairs go by,
A while to share his cordial game,
Or mend his wicker wagon-frame,
15 Still plotting how their hungry ear
That winsome voice again might hear;
For his lips could well pronounce
Words that were persuasions.
20 Gentlest guardians marked serene
His early hope, his liberal mien;
Took counsel from his guiding eyes
To make this wisdom earthly wise.
Ah, vainly do these eyes recall
25 The school-march, each day's festival,
When every morn my bosom glowed
To watch the convoy on the road;
The babe in willow wagon closed,
With rolling eyes and face composed;
30 With children forward and behind;
Like Cupids studiously inclined;
And he the chieftain paced beside,
The centre of the troop allied,
With sunny face of sweet repose,
35 To guard the babe from fancied foes.
The little captain innocent
Took the eye with him as he went;
Each village senior paused to scan
And speak the lovely caravan.
40 From the window I look out
To mark thy beautiful parade,
Stately marching in cap and coat
To some tune by fairies played;—
A music heard by thee alone
45 To works as noble led thee on.
Now Love and Pride, alas! in vain,
Up and down their glances strain.
The painted sled stands where it stood;
50 The kennel by the corded wood;
His gathered sticks to stanch the wall
Of the snow-tower, when snow should fall;

The ominous hole he dug in the sand,
 And childhood's castles built or planned;
 His daily haunts I will discern,—
 The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn,—
 And every inch of garden ground
 Paced by the blessed feet around,
 From the roadside to the brook
 Whereinto he loved to look.
 Step the meek fowls where erst they ranged;
 The wintry garden lies unchanged;
 The brook into the stream runs on;
 But the deep-eyed boy is gone.

On that shaded day,
 Dark with more clouds than tempests are,
 When: thou didst yield thy innocent breath
 In birdlike heavings unto death,
 Night came, and Nature had not thee;
 I said, "We are mates in misery."
 The morrow dawned with needless glow;
 Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must crow;
 Each trampler started; but the feet
 Of the most beautiful and sweet
 Of human youth had left the hill
 And garden,—they were bound and still.
 There's not a sparrow or a wren,
 There's not a blade of autumn grain,
 Which the four seasons do not tend
 And tides of life and increase lend;
 And every chick of every bird,
 And weed and rock-moss is preferred.
 O ostrich-like forgetfulness!
 O loss of larger in the less!
 Was there no star that could be sent,
 No watcher in the firmament,
 No angel from the countless host
 That loiters round the crystal coast,
 Could stoop to heal that only child,
 Nature's sweet marvel undefiled,
 And keep the blossom of the earth,
 Which all her harvests were not worth?
 Not mine,—I never called thee mine,
 But Nature's heir,—if I repine,
 And seeing rashly torn and moved
 Not what I made, but what I loved,
 Grow early old with grief that thou
 Must to the wastes of Nature go,—
 'Tis because a general hope
 Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.
 For flattering planets seemed to say
 This child should ill of ages stay,
 By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,

Bring the flown Muses back to men.
 Perchance not he but Nature ailed,
 The world and not the infant failed.
 It was not ripe yet to sustain
 5 A genius of so fine a strain,
 Who gazed upon the sun and moon
 As if he came unto his own,
 And, pregnant with his grander thought,
 Brought the old order into doubt.
 10 His beauty once their beauty tried;
 They could not feed him, and he died,
 And wandered backward as in scorn,
 To wait an æon to be born.
 Ill day which made this beauty waste,
 15 Plight broken, this high face defaced!
 Some went and came about the dead;
 And some in books of solace read;
 Some to their friends the tidings say;
 Some went to write, some went to pray;
 20 One tarried here, there hurried one;
 But their heart abode with none.
 Covetous death bereaved us all,
 To aggrandize one funeral.
 The eager fate which carried thee
 25 Took the largest part of me:
 For this losing is true dying;
 This is lordly man's down-lying,
 This his slow but sure reclining,
 Star by star his world resigning.
 30 O child of paradise,
 Boy who made dear his father's home,
 In whose deep eyes
 Men read the welfare of the times to come,
 35 I am too much bereft.
 The world dishonored thou hast left.
 O truth's and nature's costly lie!
 O trusted broken prophecy!
 O richest fortune sourly crossed!
 40 Born for the future, to the future lost!
 The deep Heart answered, "Weepst thou?
 Worthier cause for passion wild
 If I had not taken the child.
 45 And deemest thou as those who pore,
 With aged eyes, short way before,—
 Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast
 Of matter, and thy darling lost?
 Taught he not thee—the man of eld,
 50 Whose eyes within his eyes beheld
 Heaven's numerous hierarchy span
 The mystic gulf from God to man?

To be alone wilt thou begin
 When worlds of lovers hem thee in?
 To-morrow, when the masks shall fall
 That dizen Nature's carnival,
 The pure shall see by their own will,
 Which overflowing Love shall fill,
 'Tis not within the force of fate
 The fate-conjoined to separate.
 But thou, my votary, weepst thou?
 I gave thee sight—where is it now?
 I taught thy heart beyond the reach
 Of ritual, bible, or of speech;
 Wrote in thy mind's transparent table,
 As far as the incommunicable;
 Taught thee each private sign to raise
 Lit by the supersolar blaze.
 Past utterance, and past belief,
 And past the blasphemy of grief,
 The mysteries of Nature's heart;
 And though no Muse can these impart,
 Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,
 And all is clear from east to west.

"I came to thee as to a friend;
 Dearest, to thee I did not send
 Tutors, but a joyful eye,
 Innocence that matched the sky,
 Lovely locks, a form of wonder,
 Laughter rich as woodland thunder,
 That thou might'st entertain apart
 The richest flowering of all art:
 And, as the great all-loving Day
 Through smallest chambers takes its way,
 That thou might'st break thy daily bread
 With prophet, savior and head;
 That thou might'st cherish for thine own
 The riches of sweet Mary's Son,
 Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon.
 And thoughtest thou such guest
 Would in thy hall take up his rest?
 Would rushing life forget her laws,
 Fate's glowing revolution pause?
 High omens ask diviner guess;
 Not to be conned to tediousness.
 And know my higher gifts unbind
 The zone that girds the incarnate mind.
 When the scanty shores are full
 With Thought's perilous, whirling pool;
 When frail Nature can no more,
 Then the Spirit strikes the hour:
 My servant Death, with solving rite,
 Pours finite into infinite.

Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,
 Whose streams through Nature circling go?
 Nail the wild star to its track
 On the half-climbed zodiac?
 5 Light is light which radiates,
 Blood is blood which circulates,
 Life is life which generates,
 And many-seeming life is one,—
 Wilt thou transfix and make it none?
 10 Its onward force too starkly pent
 In figure, bone and lineament?
 Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,
 Talker! the unreplying Fate?
 Nor see the genius of the whole
 15 Ascendant in the private soul,
 Beckon it when to go and come,
 Self-announced its hour of doom?
 Fair the soul's recess and shrine,
 Magic-built to last a season;
 20 Masterpiece of love benign,
 Fairer than expansive reason
 Whose omen 'tis, and sign.
 Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know
 What rainbows teach, and sunsets show?
 25 Verdict which accumulates
 From lengthening scroll of human fates,
 Voice of earth to earth returned,
 Prayers of saints that inly burned,—
 Saying, *What is excellent,*
 30 *As God lives, is permanent;*
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again.
 Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye
 Up to his style, and manners of the sky.
 35 Not of adamant and gold
 Built he heaven stark and cold;
 No, but a nest of bending reeds,
 Flowering grass and scented weeds;
 Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,
 40 Or bow above the tempest bent;
 Built of tears and sacred flames,
 And virtue reaching to its aims;
 Built of furtherance and pursuing,
 Not of spent deeds, but of doing.
 45 Silent rushes the swift Lord
 Through ruined systems still restored,
 Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
 Plants with worlds the wilderness;
 Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
 50 Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
 House and tenant go to ground,
 Lost in God, in Godhead found."

ODE

INSCRIBED TO W. H. CHANNING

(1846)

The nephew of the great Unitarian divine had apparently been urging Emerson to take an active part in the Abolition agitation. The poem gives Emerson's explanation of his position. He was opposed to slavery and did on occasion speak out, but, as he said, "I have quite other slaves to free than those negroes, to wit, imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts." He thought that the national government should buy the slaves and free them. For Emerson's attitude toward reform and reformers, see his lecture, "New England Reformers." While he sympathized more with the reformers than with the conservatives, he felt the weakness of the radical reformers. In the lecture referred to he says:

"... Alas! my good friend, there is no part of society or of life better than any other part. All our things are right and wrong together. The wave of evil washes all our institutions alike. Do you complain of our Marriage? Our marriage is no worse than our education, our diet, our trade, our social customs."

Though loath to grieve
The evil time's sole patriot,
I cannot leave
My honeyed thought
For the priest's cant
Or statesman's rant.

If I refuse
My study for their politique,
Which at the best is trick,
The angry Muse
Puts confusion in my brain.

But who is he that prates
Of the culture of mankind,
Of better arts and life?
Go, blindworm, go,
Behold the famous States
Harrying Mexico
With rifle and with knife!

Or who, with accent bolder,
Dare praise the freedom-loving mountaineer?
I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook!
And in thy valleys, Agiochook!
The jackals of the negro-holder.

The God who made New Hampshire
Taunted the lofty land

With little men;—
Small bat and wren
House in the oak:—
If earth-fire cleave
5 The upheaved land, and bury the folk,
The southern crocodile would grieve.
Virtue palters; Right is hence;
Freedom praised, but hid;
Funeral eloquence
10 Rattles the coffin-lid.

What boots thy zeal,
O glowing friend,
That would indignant rend
15 The northland from the south?
Wherefore? to what good end?
Boston Bay and Bunker Hill
Would serve things still;—
Things are of the snake.

20 The horseman serves the horse,
The neatherd serves the neat,
The merchant serves the purse,
The eater serves his meat;
25 'Tis the day of the chattel,
Web to weave, and corn to grind;
Things are in the saddle,
And ride mankind.

30 There are two laws discrete,
Not reconciled,—
Law for man, and law for thing;
The last builds town and fleet,
But it runs wild,
35 And doth the man unking.

'Tis fit the forest fall,
The steep be graded,
The mountain tunnelled,
40 The sand shaded,
The orchard planted,
The glebe tilled,
The prairie granted,
The steamer built.

45 Let man serve law for man;
Life for friendship, live for love,
For truth's and harmony's behoof;
The state may follow how it can,
50 As Olympus follows Jove.

Yet do not I implore
The wrinkled shopman to my sounding woods,

Nor bid the unwilling senator
Ask votes of thrushes in the solitudes.
Every one to his chosen work;—
Foolish hands may mix and mar;
Wise and sure the issues are.
Round they roll till dark is light,
Sex to sex, and even to odd;—
The over-god
Who marries Right to Might,
Who peoples, unpeoples,—
He who exterminates
Races by stronger races,
Black by white faces,—
Knows to bring honey
Out of the lion;
Grafts gentlest scion
On pirate and Turk.

The Cossack eats Poland,
Like stolen fruit;
Her last noble is ruined,
Her last poet mute:
Straight, into double band
The victors divide;
Half for freedom strike and stand;—
The astonished Muse finds thousands at her side.

HAMATREYA

(1846)

This poem is based on a passage in the *Vishnu Purana* which Emerson copied in his journal in 1845. Here are a few lines: "These and other kings who with perishable frames have possessed this ever-during world, and who, blinded with deceptive notions of individual occupation, have indulged the feeling that suggests 'This earth is mine,—it is my son's,—it belongs to my dynasty,'—have all passed away. . . . Earth laughs, as if smiling with autumnal flowers to behold her kings unable to effect the subjugation of themselves." The names in the opening line of the poem are those of early settlers in Concord.

Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint
Possessed the land which rendered to their toil
Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and
wood.

Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,
Saying, " 'Tis mine, my children's and my name's.
How sweet the west wind sounds in my own
trees!

How graceful climb those shadows on my hill!
I fancy these pure waters and the flags
Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil."

- 5 Where are these men? Asleep beneath their
grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
10 Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not
theirs;
Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet
Clear of the grave.
They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,
15 And sighed for all that bounded their domain;
"This suits me for a pasture; that's my park;
We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,
And misty lowland, where to go for peat.
The land is well,—lies fairly to the south.
20 'Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and
back,
To find the sitfast acres where you left them."
Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.
25 Hear what the Earth says:—

EARTH-SONG

- "Mine and yours;
Mine, not yours.
Earth endures;
Stars abide—
Shine down in the old sea;
Old are the shores;
But where are old men?
35 I who have seen much,
Such have I never seen.

"The lawyer's deed
Ran sure,
In tail,
To them, and to their heirs
Who shall succeed,
Without fail,
Forevermore.

"Here is the land,
Shaggy with wood,
With its old valley,
Mound and flood,
But the heritors?—
Fled like the flood's foam,
The lawyer, and the laws,

And the kingdom,
Clean swept herefrom.

"They called me theirs,
Who so controlled me;
Yet every one
Wished to stay, and is gone,
How am I theirs,
If they cannot hold me,
But I hold them?"

When I heard the Earth-song
I was no longer brave;
My avarice cooled
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE (1846)

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent,
Untold intent;
But it is a god,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will reward,—
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—

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Keep thee to-day,
To-morrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise
Flits across her bosom young,
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy-free;
Nor thou detain her vesture's hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.

DAYS (1851?; 1857)

Emerson, who once said he thought "Days" perhaps his best poem, wrote in his journal in 1852:

"... I have written within a twelvemonth verses ('Days') which I do not remember the composition or correction of, and could not write the like to-day, and have only, for proof of their being mine, various external evidences, as the manuscripts in which I find them, and the circumstance that I have sent copies of them to friends, etc."

Cf. the following passage from the essay, "Works and Days," in Emerson's *Society and Solitude*:

"The days are ever divine as to the first Aryans. . . . They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly party; but they say nothing, and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away."

See E. S. Oliver, "Emerson's 'Days,'" *New England Quarterly*, XIX, 518-524 (December, 1946).

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,

Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them
all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

BRAHMA

(1857)

Lowell, who printed this poem in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, wrote to Emerson: "You have seen, no doubt, how the Philistines have been parodying your 'Brahma' and showing how they still believe in their special god Baal, and are unable to arrive at a conception of an omnipresent Deity."

In *My Own Story*, J. T. Trowbridge thus describes the effect created by the poem: "It was more talked about and puzzled over and parodied than any other poem of sixteen lines published within my recollection. 'What does it mean?' was the question readers everywhere asked; and if one had the reputation of seeing a little way into the Concord philosophy, he was liable at any time to be stopped on the street by some perplexed inquirer, who would draw him into the nearest doorway, produce a crumpled newspaper clipping from the recesses of a waistcoat pocket, and, with knitted brows, exclaim, 'Here! you think you understand Emerson; now tell me what all this is about,—If the red slayer think he slays,' and so forth."

"Brahma," as Frederic I. Carpenter points out, "was developed out of snatches of the ancient Hindu Scriptures" ("Immortality from India," *American Literature*, I, 237, November, 1929; see the entire article or the discussion in Dr. Carpenter's book *Emerson and Asia*).

Cf. the following passage from Emerson's essay on Plato: "In all nations there are minds which incline to dwell in the conception of the fundamental Unity. . . . This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writings of the East, and chiefly in the Indian Scriptures . . ."

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

THE TEST

(*Musa loquitur.*)

(1861)

In a sequel to the following poem entitled "Solution," Emerson explains that the five poetic teachers of the race are Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, and Goethe.

I hung my verses in the wind,
Time and tide their faults may find.
All were winnowed through and through,
Five lines lasted sound and true;
Five were melted in a pot
Than the South more fierce and hot;
These the siroc could not melt,
Fire their fiercer flaming felt,
And the meaning was more white
Than July's meridian light.
Sunshine cannot bleach the snow,
Nor time unmake what poets know.
Have you eyes to find the five
Which five hundred did survive?

TERMINUS

(1866; 1867)

Terminus was the Roman deity who presided over boundaries and landmarks. Emerson's son writes:

"In the last days of 1866, when I was returning from a long stay in the Western States, I met my father in New York just starting for his usual winter lecturing trip, in those days extending beyond the Mississippi. We spent the night together at the St. Denis Hotel, and as we sat by the fire he read me two or three of his poems for the new May-Day volume, among them 'Terminus.' It almost startled me. No thought of his ageing had ever come to me, and there he sat, with no apparent abatement of bodily vigor, and young in spirit, recognizing with

serene acquiescence his failing forces; I think he smiled as he read. He recognized, as none of us did, that his working days were nearly done. They lasted about five years longer, although he lived, in comfortable health, yet ten years beyond those of his activity. Almost at the time when he wrote 'Terminus' he wrote in his journal:—

"'Within I do not find wrinkles and used heart, but unspent youth.'"

It is time to be old,
To take in sail:—
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: "No more!
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs: no more invent;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And,—fault of novel germs,—
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,
Who when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,
The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins,—
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb."

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
"Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed."

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MUSIC

(1883)

Let me go where'er I will,
I hear a sky-born music still:
It sounds from all things old,
It sounds from all things young,
From all that's fair, from all that's foul,
Peals out a cheerful song.

It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard,
But in the darkest, meanest things
There alway, alway something stings.

'Tis not in the high stars alone,
Nor in the cup of budding flowers,
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
But in the mud and scum of things
There alway, alway something sings.

THE ENCHANTER

(1883)

In 1866 Emerson wrote in his journal: "The maiden has no guess what the youth sees in her. It is not in her, but in his eyes, which rain on her the tints and forms and grace of Eden; as the Sun, deluging the landscape with his beams, makes the world he smiles upon." Compare the essay, "Illusions."

In the deep heart of man a poet dwells
Who all the day of life his summer story tells;
Scatters on every eye dust of his spells,
Scent, form and color; to the flowers and shells
Wins the believing child with wondrous tales;
Touches a cheek with colors of romance,
And crowds a history into a glance;
Gives beauty to the lake and fountain,
Spies oversea the fires of the mountain;
When thrushes ope their throat, 'tis he that
sings,

And he that paints the oriole's fiery wings.
The little Shakespeare in the maiden's heart
Makes Romeo of a plough-boy on his cart;
Opens the eye to Virtue's starlike meed
And gives persuasion to a gentle deed.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817 - 1862

I seem to see somewhat more of my own kith and kin in the lichens on the rocks than in any books. It does seem as if mine were a peculiarly wild nature, which so yearns toward all wildness.

—THOREAU, *Journals*, VII, 296 (December 15, 1841).

The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot.

—THOREAU, *Journals*, XI, 4 (March 5, 1853).

Thoreau belonged to no "school" except his own, either in his time or in ours. So uncompromising was his individualism that he wanted to be nothing except himself. He would like, so he said, a world in which there were as many different kinds of people as possible. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."

—JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH.

Henry David Thoreau (in Concord the name is pronounced Thō'ro), the only one of the Concord writers who was a native of the village, was born there on July 12, 1817. He was the youngest of the New England group with the exception of Lowell, who was his opposite in most respects. Thoreau's family, unlike those of most New England writers, was undistinguished and consisted, says F. B. Sanborn, of "small merchants, artisans, or farmers, mostly." On his mother's side he was English and Scotch. His paternal ancestors came from the island of Jersey in the English Channel; and as the name Thoreau suggests, there was a French strain in him, as in Philip Freneau.

With some financial difficulties he made his way through Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1837. Jones Very, the Transcendentalist poet, was his tutor in Greek. Thoreau became perhaps the best Greek scholar among the Transcendentalists, but unlike Emerson, he seems to have cared little for Plato. Other important literary influences were the English poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, somewhat later, the Oriental Scriptures, Emerson, and Carlyle. After leaving college he did not, like his contemporaries, enter a profession. With his beloved brother John, who died in 1842, he taught school in Concord for a

time, but he did not wish to be tied down to any one occupation indefinitely. Since his writing brought him little money, he resorted to surveying, to odd jobs, or to the family trade of pencil-making as a means of supporting himself.

It was not until about 1840 that he definitely made up his mind to become a writer. He had come meanwhile under the influence of Emerson, whose *Nature* (1836) made a deep impression on him. For a time he lived with the Emersons. At one time he is said to have imitated even Emerson's manner of speech as well as his way of writing. In later years he seems to have drawn somewhat away from Emerson. He was not at all the second-rate Emerson that Lowell thought him. Thoreau was active in certain Transcendental undertakings. He contributed to the *Dial* and assisted Emerson with the editing of it.

His method of writing resembles Emerson's in that most of his writings are drawn from his journals. During his lifetime he published only two books. The first of these, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), made little impression. Of the edition of one thousand copies printed at the author's own risk, 75 were given away while Munroe the publisher sold 219 and returned to the author the remaining 706. Thoreau's best known work, *Walden*, was published in 1854. Had the book been first published thirty years later, it might have enjoyed the success that attended the nature books of John Burroughs and John Muir. *Walden* is the first and best example, however, of that distinctively American literary type, the "nature book." The bulk of Thoreau's writing was not published until after his death from tuberculosis on May 6, 1862. During his lifetime, however, Thoreau had published several notable articles and addresses in the magazines. Perhaps the most remarkable of these is his "Civil Disobedience." Although not an active reformer, Thoreau was on occasion one of the most outspoken of Abolitionists. In 1845, following the example of Bronson Alcott, he refused to pay a poll tax to a government which permitted slavery to exist, and spent a night in Concord jail. He was released when members of the family paid the tax.

Thoreau's reputation and influence have grown slowly but steadily since his death. Even yet, however, he suffers from two misconceptions: that he was a mere disciple of Emerson and that he was primarily a naturalist in any scientific sense. He once wrote in his journal: "Man cannot afford to be a naturalist, to look at Nature directly, but only with the side of his eye. He must look through and beyond her." He was one of the most original thinkers and one of the best prose writers of his time.

Most significant of his ideas, from the point of view of the twentieth century, is his attitude toward the growing industrial civilization of the United States. Many new inventions struck him as "improved means to an unimproved end." In the *Democratic Review* for November, 1843, he wrote:

"How little do the most wonderful inventions of modern times detain us. They insult nature. Every machine, or particular application, seems a slight outrage against universal laws. How many fine inventions are there which do not clutter the ground? We think that those only succeed which minister to our sensible and animal wants, which bake or brew, wash or warm, or the like. But are those of no account which are patented by fancy and imagination, and succeed so admirably in our dreams that they give the tone still to our waking thoughts?"

The standard editions of Thoreau's works are the *Riverside* (1894) and the *Walden* (1906). Carl Bode has edited Thoreau's *Collected Poems* (1943) in both popular and critical editions.

The best biography is by Henry Seidel Canby (1939), but Frank B. Sanborn's biography (1917) still has some value. Joseph Wood Krutch's *Henry David Thoreau* (1948) is chiefly a critical study. See also Townsend Scudder's *Concord: an American Town* (1947) and his chapter on Thoreau in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). Odell Shepard's *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals* (1927) is a suitable companion to Bliss Perry's *The Heart of Emerson's Journals* (1926). Excellent criticism is found in F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (1941); Mark Van Doren, *Henry David Thoreau* (1916); and George F. Whicher, *Walden Revisited* (1945). Robert Louis Stevenson has an essay on Thoreau in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). James Russell Lowell's essay is more brilliant than enlightening, but Emerson's "Thoreau" is a penetrating interpretation. For Thoreau's classical background, see Clarence Gohdes, "Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Arts," *Classical Journal*, XXIII, 323-336 (February, 1928). Bartholow V. Crawford's *Henry David Thoreau: Representative Selections* (1934), in the American Writers Series, has a good working bibliography and a useful introductory essay. Further references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

CRITICAL COMMENTS

. . . He had "fine translunary things" in him. His better style as a writer is in keeping with the simplicity and purity of his life. We have said that his range was narrow, but to be a master is to be a master. He had caught his English at its living source, among the poets and prose-writers of its best days; his literature was extensive and erudite; his quotations are always nuggets of the purest ore: there are sentences of his as perfect as anything in the language, and thoughts as clearly crystallized; his metaphors and images are always fresh from the soil; he had watched Nature like a detective who is to go upon the stand; as we read him, it seems as if all-out-of-doors had kept a diary and become its own Claude Lorraine glass; compared with his, all other books of similar aim, even White's *Selborne*, seem dry as a country clergyman's meteorological journal in an old almanac (James Russell Lowell, "Thoreau," 1865).

Upon me this pure, narrow, sunnily-ascetic Thoreau had exercised a great charm. I have scarce written ten sentences since I was introduced to him, but his influence might be somewhere detected by a close observer (Robert Louis Stevenson, Preface to *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 1882).

He was intellectually one of the bravest men that ever lived, and also a clammy prig. He was a prose-stylist of singular and signal excellence and left no complete book behind him (Ludwig Lewisohn, *Expression in America*, 1932, p. 136).

LETTERS*

TO HORACE GREELEY (AT NEW YORK)

CONCORD, May 19, 1848.

MY FRIEND GREELEY,—I have to-day received from you fifty dollars. It is five years that I have

* Reprinted from *Familiar Letters of Henry David Thoreau* by permission of, and by arrangement with, the Houghton Mifflin Company.

5 been maintaining myself entirely by manual labor,—not getting a cent from any other quarter or employment. Now this toil has occupied so few days,—perhaps a single month, spring and fall each,—that I must have had more leisure than any of my brethren for study and literature. I have done rude work of all kinds. From July, 1845, to September, 1847, I lived by myself in the forest, in a fairly good cabin, plastered and warmly covered, which I built myself.

There I earned all I needed and kept to my own affairs. During that time my weekly outlay was but seven-and-twenty cents; and I had an abundance of all sorts. Unless the human race perspire more than I do, there is no occasion to live by the sweat of their brow. If men cannot get on without money (the smallest amount will suffice), the truest method of earning it is by working as a laborer at one dollar per day. You are least dependent so; I speak as an expert, having used several kinds of labor.

Why should the scholar make a constant complaint that his fate is specially hard? We are too often told of "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties,"—how poets depend on patrons and starve in garrets, or at last go mad and die. Let us hear the other side of the story. Why should not the scholar, if he is really wiser than the multitude, do coarse work now and then? Why not let his greater wisdom enable him to do without things? If you say the wise man is unlucky, how could you distinguish him from the foolishly unfortunate? - - -

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER)

CONCORD, *November 16, 1857.*

MR. BLAKE,—You have got the start again. It was I that owed you a letter or two, if I mistake not.

They make a great ado nowadays about hard times;¹ but I think that the community generally, ministers and all, take a wrong view of the matter, though some of the ministers preaching according to a formula may pretend to take a right one. This general failure, both private and public, is rather occasion for rejoicing, as reminding us whom we have at our helm,—that justice is always done. If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed,—exhilarating as the fragrance of sal-lows in spring. Does it not say somewhere, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"? If thousands are thrown out of employment, it sug-

gests that they were not well employed. Why don't they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

5 The merchants and company have long laughed at transcendentalism, higher laws, etc., crying, "None of your moonshine," as if they were anchored to something not only definite, but sure and permanent. If there was any institution which was presumed to rest on a solid and secure basis, and more than any other represented this boasted common sense, prudence, and practical talent, it was the bank; and now those very banks are found to be mere reeds shaken by the wind. Scarcely one in the land has kept its promise. It would seem as if you only need live forty years in any age of the world, to see its most promising government become the government of Kansas, and banks nowhere. Not merely the Brook Farm and Fourierite communities, but now the community generally has failed. But there is the moonshine still, serene, beneficent, and unchanged. Hard times, I say, have this value, among others, that they show us what such promises are worth,—where the *sure* banks are. I heard some merchant praised the other day because he had paid some of his debts, though it took nearly all he had (why, I've done as much as that myself many times, and a little more), and then gone to board. What if he has? I hope he's got a good boarding-place, and can pay for it. It's not everybody that can. However, in my opinion, it is cheaper to keep house,—*i.e.*, if you don't keep too big a one.

Men will tell you sometimes that "money's hard." That shows it was not made to eat, I say. Only think of a man in this new world, in his log cabin, in the midst of a corn and potato patch, with a sheepfold on one side, talking about money being hard! So are flints hard; there is no alloy in them. What has that to do with his raising his food, cutting his wood (or breaking it), keeping in-doors when it rains, and, if need be, spinning and weaving his clothes? Some of those who sank with the steamer the other day found out that money was *heavy* too. Think of a man's priding himself on this kind of wealth, as if it greatly enriched him. As if one struggling in mid-ocean with a bag of gold on his back should gasp out, "I am worth a hundred thousand dollars." I see them struggling

¹ Thoreau refers to the panic, or depression, of 1857.

just as ineffectually on dry land, nay, even more hopelessly, for, in the former case, rather than sink, they will finally let the bag go; but in the latter they are pretty sure to hold and go down with it. I see them swimming about in their great-coats, collecting their rents, really *getting their dues*, drinking bitter draughts which only increase their thirst, becoming more and more water-logged, till finally they sink plumb down to the bottom. But enough of this.

Have you ever read Ruskin's books? If not, I would recommend you to try the second and third volumes (not parts) of his "Modern Painters." I am now reading the fourth, and have read most of his other books lately. They are singularly good and encouraging, though not without crudeness and bigotry. The themes in the volumes referred to are Infinity, Beauty, Imagination, Love of Nature, etc.,—all treated in a very living manner. I am rather surprised by them. It is remarkable that these things should be said with reference to painting chiefly, rather than literature. The "Seven Lamps of Architecture," too, is made of good stuff; but, as I remember, there is too much about art in it for me and the Hottentots. We want to know about matters and things in general. Our house is as yet a hut.

You must have been enriched by your solitary walk over the mountains. I suppose that I feel the same awe when on their summits that many do on entering a church. To see what kind of earth that is on which you have a house and garden somewhere, perchance! It is equal to the lapse of many years. You must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for *it* is at home there, though *you* are not. It might have been composed there, and will have no farther to go to return to dust there, than in your garden; but your spirit inevitably comes away, and brings your body with it, if it lives. Just as awful really, and as glorious, is your garden. See how I can play with my fingers! They are the funniest companions I have ever found! Where did they come from? What strange control I have over them! *Who* am I? What are they?—those little peaks—call them Madison, Jefferson, Lafayette. What is *the matter*? My fingers ten, I say. Why, erelong, they may form the topmost crystal of Mount Washington. I go up there to see my body's cousins. There are some fingers, toes, bowels, etc., that I

take an interest in, and therefore I am interested in all their relations.

Let me suggest a theme for you: to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you,—returning to this essay again and again, until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Give this good reason to yourself for having gone over the mountains, for mankind is ever going over a mountain. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again, especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short. It did not take very long to get over the mountain, you thought; but have you got over it indeed? If you have been to the top of Mount Washington, let me ask, what did you find there? That is the way they prove witnesses, you know. Going up there and being blown on is nothing. We never do much climbing while we are there, but we eat our luncheon, etc., very much as at home. It is after we get home that we really go over the mountain, if ever. What did the mountain say? What did the mountain do?

I keep a mountain anchored off eastward a little way, which I ascend in my dreams both awake and asleep. Its broad base spreads over a village or two, which do not know it; neither does it know them, nor do I when I ascend it. I can see its general outline as plainly now in my mind as that of Wachusett. I do not invent in the least, but state exactly what I see. I find that I go up it when I am light-footed and earnest. It ever smokes like an altar with its sacrifice. I am not aware that a single villager frequents it or knows of it. I keep this mountain to ride instead of a horse.

Do you not mistake about seeing Moosehead Lake from Mount Washington? That must be about one hundred and twenty miles distant, or nearly twice as far as the Atlantic, which last some doubt if they can see thence. Was it not Umbagog?

Dr. Solger has been lecturing in the vestry in this town on Geography, to Sanborn's scholars, for several months past, at five P.M. Emerson and Alcott have been to hear him. I

was surprised when the former asked me, the other day, if I was not going to hear Dr. Solger. What, to be sitting in a meeting-house cellar at that time of day, when you might possibly be out-doors! I never thought of such a thing. What was the sun made for? If he does not prize day-light, I do. Let him lecture to owls and dormice. He must be a wonderful lecturer indeed who can keep me indoors at such an hour, when the night is coming in which no man can work.

Are you in want of amusement nowadays? Then play a little at the game of getting a living. There never was anything equal to it. Do it temperately, though, and don't sweat. Don't let this secret out, for I have a design against the Opera. OPERA!! Pass along the exclamations, devil.²

Now is the time to become conversant with your wood-pile (this comes under Work for the Month), and be sure you put some warmth into it by your mode of getting it. Do not consent to be passively warmed. An intense degree of that is the hotness that is threatened. But a positive warmth within can withstand the fiery furnace, as the vital heat of a living man can withstand the heat that cooks meat.

TO MYRON B. BENTON (AT
LEEDSVILLE, N. Y.)

CONCORD, March 21, 1862.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your very kind letter, which, ever since I received it, I have intended to answer before I died, however briefly. I am encouraged to know, that, so far as you are concerned, I have not written my books in vain. I was particularly gratified, some years ago, when one of my friends and neighbors said, "I wish you would write another book,—write it for me." He is actually more familiar with what I have written than I am myself.

The verses you refer to in Conway's "Dial," were written by F. B. Sanborn of this town. I never wrote for that journal.

I am pleased when you say that in "The Week" you liked especially "those little snatches of poetry interspersed through the book," for these, I suppose, are the least attractive to most readers. I have not been engaged in any par-

² Printer's devil, pass along the exclamation points.

ticular work on Botany, or the like, though, if I were to live, I should have much to report on Natural History generally.

You ask particularly after my health. I suppose that I have not many months to live; but, of course, I know nothing about it. I may add that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU,
by SOPHIA E. THOREAU.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

(May, 1849)

This essay, after Thoreau had used it as a lecture, was published in Elizabeth Peabody's short-lived magazine, *Aesthetic Papers*, in May, 1849, under the title "Resistance to Civil Government." Thoreau's antipathy to slavery and his dislike of the War with Mexico led him to take a more extreme position than he otherwise would have taken. Like Bronson Alcott before him, he refused to pay his poll-tax to a state that he thought endorsed such things. He was arrested while living at Walden Pond and spent one night in jail. (See *Walden* for another account of the episode.) The view of government presented in the essay is that of the extreme individualist. "The only government that I recognize," he said, "—and it matters not how few are at the head of it, or how small its army—is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice." It would hardly be possible to establish a state on Thoreau's philosophy of government. If the individual is to be the sole judge of his duties to the state, how is one to discriminate between anarchy and justifiable opposition to the rulers of the state? Thoreau's views, as George F. Whicher puts it, "are not reconcilable with Socialism, Communism, or any modern program for the conversion of society to a classless basis through the domination of a class. They do not contemplate the fusion of individuals into masses, nor the hammering of masses into pressure-groups and parties." The essay is said to have furnished Mahatma Gandhi the idea of his program of passive resistance to the British government in India. Thoreau, as his reaction to the Civil War indicates, was not a pacifist. The essay is ably discussed in Henry Seidel Canby's *Thoreau* (1939), pp. 231-238, and George F. Whicher's *Walden Revisited* (1945), Chapter 8. See also Raymond Adams, "Thoreau's Sources for 'Resistance to Civil Government,'" *Studies in Philology*, XLII, 640-653 (July, 1945).

I heartily accept the motto,—“That government is best which governs least”;¹ and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,—“That government is best which governs not at all”; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most

expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?—in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart.

¹ Cf. Emerson's essay on "Politics," published in 1844: "Hence the less government we have the better,—the fewer laws, and the less confided power."

They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts,—a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be,—

*"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried."*

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the some sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders—serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few,—as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*—serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least:—

*"I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world."*

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward

this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Paley,² a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to say, "that so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconvenience, it is the will of God that the established government be obeyed, and no longer. . . . This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply,

² William Paley (1743-1805), author of the widely read *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, first published in 1785.

in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does any one think that Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

*"A drab of state, a cloth-o'-silver slut,
To have her train borne up, and her soul trail in
the dirt."*

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, coöperate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade, and quietly read the price-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and God-speed, to the

right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting *for the right* is *doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. *They* will then be the only slaves. Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to. Shall we not have the advantage of his wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reason to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one, thus proving that he is himself *available* for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a *man*, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the popula-

tion has been returned too large. How many *men* are there to a square thousand miles in this country? Hardly one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow,—one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the Almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund for the support of the widows and orphans that may be; who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico, —see if I would go"; and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at naught; as if the State were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that degree that it left off sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin, comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, *unmoral*, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of

patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves,—the union between themselves and the State,—and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they stand in the same relation to the State, that the State does to the Union? And have not the same reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union, which have prevented them from resisting the State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy *it*? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing that you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see that you are never cheated again. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divides states and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy *is* worse than the evil. *It* makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offense never contemplated by government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those who placed him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the state, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth,—certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do *everything*, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and uncconciliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail

through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year—no more—in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensable mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with,—for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel,—and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name,—if ten *honest* men only,—ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State's ambassador,³ who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister,—though at present she can discover only an act of in-

³ Samuel Hoare, of Concord, who had been sent to Charleston to protest against the imprisonment of free Negro seamen from Massachusetts.

hospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her,—the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her but *against* her,—the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man's real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods,—

though both will serve the same purpose,—because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man—not to make any invidious comparison—is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the "means" are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavour to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money," said he;—and one took a penny out of his pocket;—If you use money which has the image of Cæsar on it, and which he has made current and valuable, that is, *if you are men of the State*, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Cæsar's government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it; "Render therefore to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to God those things which are God's,"—leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass

me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame." No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing:—"Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in de-

tail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

I have paid no poll-tax for six years.⁴ I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and *they* were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of *men* being *forced* to live this way or

⁴ Thoreau, however, paid his poll-tax of \$1.50 in 1849, the year in which the essay was first published (Canby, *Thoreau*, p. 235).

that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money or your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, "Come, boys, it is time to lock up"; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My roommate was introduced to me by the jailer as "a first-rate fellow and a clever man." When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course; and, as the world goes, I believe he was. "Why," said he, "they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it." As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been

sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp.

It was like traveling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town-clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village-inn,—a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town.⁵ I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left; but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison,—for some one interfered, and paid that tax,⁶—I did not perceive

⁵ County seat.

⁶ The tax was paid by one of the Thoreau family and not by Emerson, as has been often stated.

that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man; and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene,—the town, and State, and country,—greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are; that in their sacrifices to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the grating of a jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour,—for the horse was soon tackled,—was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.⁷

This is the whole history of "My Prisons."

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and as for

⁷ "[Julian Hawthorne] reports that Thoreau lost his temper when he was jailed. This seems to be true. Sam Staples, his jailor, interviewed many years later, said Henry 'was mad as the devil' when he turned him loose in the morning. Thoreau was a great rationalizer of his emotions when the time came to philosophize them!" (Canby, *Thoreau*, p. 233).

supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man or a musket to shoot one with,—the dollar is innocent,—but I am concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his action be biased by obstinacy, or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, This is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feeling of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not

of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But, if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people, to discover a pretext for conformity.

*"We must affect our country as our parents,
And if at any time we alienate
Our love or industry from doing it honor,
We must respect effects and teach the soul
Matter of conscience and religion,
And not desire rule or benefit."*

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better a patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; but seen from a point of view a little higher, they are what I have described them; seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or kindred subjects, content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom and eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency, or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given by him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87. "I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which the

various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, "Because it was a part of the original compact,—let it stand."⁸ Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect,—what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in America to-day with regard to slavery, but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer as the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man,—from which what new and singular code of social duties might be inferred?—"The manner," says he, "in which the governments of those States where slavery exists are to regulate it is for their own consideration, under their responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me, and they never will."⁹

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humility; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountain-head.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy

wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation?

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

from WALDEN (1854)

"His [Thoreau's] aim was a noble and a useful one, in the direction of 'plain living and high thinking.' It was a practical sermon on Emerson's text that 'things are in the saddle and ride mankind,' an attempt to solve Carlyle's problem (condensed from

⁸ This and the preceding quotation are from Daniel Webster's speech on the Texas question, December 22, 1845.

⁹ From Webster's speech on a bill to exclude slavery from the territories, August 12, 1848.

Johnson) of 'lessening your denominator.' His whole life was a rebuke of the waste and aimlessness of our American luxury, which is an abject enslavement to tawdry upholstery" (Lowell, "Thoreau").

After reading *Walden*, Whittier wrote to James T. Fields:

"Thoreau's 'Walden' is capital reading, but very wicked and heathenish. The practical moral of it seems to be that if a man is willing to sink himself into a woodchuck he can live as cheaply as that quadruped; but after all, for me, I prefer walking on two legs."

I. ECONOMY

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again. - - -

Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber. It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise. The owner of the axe, as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye; but I returned it sharper than I received it. It was a pleasant hillside where I worked, covered with pine woods, through which I looked out on the pond, and a small open field in the woods where pines and hickories were springing up. The ice in the pond was not yet dissolved, though there were some open spaces, and it was all dark colored and saturated with water. There were some slight flurries of snow during the days that I worked there; but for the most part when I came out on to the railroad, on my way home, its yellow sand heap stretched away gleaming in the hazy atmosphere, and the rails shone in the spring sun, and I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us. They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself. One

day, when my axe had come off and I had cut a green hickory for a wedge, driving it with a stone, and had placed the whole to soak in a pond hole in order to swell the wood, I saw a striped snake run into the water, and he lay on the bottom, apparently without inconvenience, as long as I stayed there, or more than a quarter of an hour; perhaps because he had not yet fairly come out of the torpid state. It appeared to me that for a like reason men remain in their present low and primitive condition; but if they should feel the influence of the spring of springs arousing them, they would of necessity rise to a higher and more ethereal life. I had previously seen the snakes in frosty mornings in my path with portions of their bodies still numb and inflexible, waiting for the sun to thaw them. On the 1st of April it rained and melted the ice, and in the early part of the day, which was very foggy, I heard a stray goose groping about over the pond and cackling as if lost, or like the spirit of the fog.

So I went on for some days cutting and hewing timber, and also studs and rafters, all with my narrow axe, not having many communicable or scholar-like thoughts, singing to myself,—

*Men say they know many things;
But lo! they have taken wings,—
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances;
The wind that blows
Is all that anybody knows.*

I hewed the main timbers six inches square, most of the studs on two sides only, and the rafters and floor timbers on one side, leaving the rest of the bark on, so that they were just as straight and much stronger than sawed ones. Each stick was carefully mortised or tenoned by its stump, for I had borrowed other tools by this time. My days in the woods were not very long ones; yet I usually carried my dinner of bread and butter, and read the newspaper in which it was wrapped, at noon, sitting amid the green pine boughs which I had cut off, and to my bread was imparted some of their fragrance, for my hands were covered with a thick coat of pitch. Before I had done I was more the friend than the foe of the pine tree, though I had cut down some of them, having become better acquainted with it. Sometimes a rambler in the wood was attracted by the sound of my axe, and we chatted pleasantly over the chips which I had made.

By the middle of April, for I made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising. I had already bought the shanty of James Collins, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards. James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one. When I called to see it he was not at home. I walked about the outside, at first unobserved from within, the window was so deep and high. It was of small dimensions, with a peaked cottage roof, and not much else to be seen, the dirt being raised five feet all around as if it were a compost heap. The roof was the soundest part, though a good deal warped and made brittle by the sun. Door-sill there was none, but a perennial passage for the hens under the door board. Mrs. C. came to the door and asked me to view it from the inside. The hens were driven in by my approach. It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, dank, clammy, and aguish, only here a board and there a board which would not bear removal. She lighted a lamp to show me the inside of the roof and the walls, and also that the board floor extended under the bed, warning me not to step into the cellar, a sort of dust hole two feet deep. In her own words, they were "good boards overhead, good boards all around, and a good window,"—of two whole squares originally, only the cat had passed out that way lately. There was a stove, a bed, and a place to sit, an infant in the house where it was born, a silk parasol, gilt-framed looking-glass, and a patent new coffee-mill nailed to an oak sapling, all told. The bargain was soon concluded, for James had in the meanwhile returned. I to pay four dollars and twenty-five cents tonight, he to vacate at five tomorrow morning, selling to nobody else meanwhile: I to take possession at six. It were well, he said, to be there early, and anticipate certain indistinct but wholly unjust claims on the score of ground rent and fuel. This he assured me was the only encumbrance. At six I passed him and his family on the road. One large bundle held their all,—bed, coffeemill, looking-glass, hens,—all but the cat; she took to the woods and became a wild cat, and, as I learned afterward, trod in a trap set for woodchucks, and so became a dead cat at last.

I took down this dwelling the same morning, drawing the nails, and removed it to the pond side by small cart-loads, spreading the boards on

the grass there to bleach and warp back again in the sun. One early thrush gave me a note or two as I drove along the woodland path. I was informed treacherously by a young Patrick that neighbor Seeley, an Irishman, in the intervals of the carting, transferred the still tolerable straight, and drivable nails, staples, and spikes to his pocket, and then stood when I came back to pass the time of day, and look freshly up, unconcerned, with spring thoughts, at the devastation; there being a dearth of work, as he said. He was there to represent spectatordom, and help make this seemingly insignificant event one with the removal of the gods of Troy.

I dug my cellar in the side of a hill sloping to the south, where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, down through sumach and blackberry roots, and the lowest stain of vegetation, six feet square by seven deep, to a fine sand where potatoes would not freeze in any winter. The sides were left shelving, and not stoned; but the sun having never shown on them, the sand still keeps its place. It was but two hours' work. I took particular pleasure in this breaking of ground, for in almost all latitudes men dig into the earth for an equable temperature. Under the most splendid house in the city is still to be found the cellar where they store their roots as of old, and long after the superstructure has disappeared posterity remark its dent in the earth. The house is still but a sort of porch at the entrance of a burrow.

At length, in the beginning of May, with the help of some of my acquaintances, rather to improve so good an occasion for neighborliness than from any necessity, I set up the frame of my house. No man was ever more honored in the character of his raisers than I.¹ They are destined, I trust, to assist at the raising of loftier structures one day. I began to occupy my house on the 4th of July, as soon as it was boarded and roofed, for the boards were carefully feather-edged and lapped, so that it was perfectly impervious to rain; but before boarding I laid the foundation of a chimney at one end, bringing two cartloads of stones up the hill from the pond in my arms. I built the chimney after my hoeing in the fall, before a fire became necessary for warmth, doing my cooking in the meanwhile

¹ Among the "raisers" were Emerson, Alcott, William Ellery Channing the poet, and George William Curtis.

out of doors on the ground, early in the morning: which mode I still think is in some respects more convenient and agreeable than the usual one. When it stormed before my bread was baked, I fixed a few boards over the fire, and sat under them to watch my loaf, and passed some pleasant hours in that way. In those days, when my hands were much employed, I read but little, but the least scraps of paper which lay on the ground, my holder, or tablecloth, afforded me as much entertainment, in fact answered the same purpose as the Iliad.

Before winter I built a chimney, and shingled the sides of my house, which were already impervious to rain, with imperfect and sappy shingles made of the first slice of the log, whose edges I was obliged to straighten with a plane.

I have thus a tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long, and eight-foot posts, with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap doors, one door at the end, and a brick fireplace opposite. The exact cost of my house, paying the usual price for such materials as I used, but not counting the work, all of which was done by myself, was as follows; and I give the details because very few are able to tell exactly what their houses cost, and fewer still, if any, the separate cost of the various materials which compose them:—

Boards	\$8.03½, mostly shanty boards.	
Refuse shingles for		
roof and sides...	4.00	
Laths	1.25	
Two second-hand		
windows with		
glass	2.43	
One thousand old		
brick	4.00	
Two casks of lime.	2.40	That was high.
Hair .....	.31	More than I needed.
Mantle-tree iron.	.15	
Nails	3.90	
Hinges and screws.	.14	
Latch .....	.10	
Chalk .....	.01	
Transportation..	1.40	I carried a good part
		on my back.
In all	\$28.12½	

These are all the materials excepting the timber, stones, and sand, which I claimed by squatter's right. I have also a small wood-shed ad-

joining, made chiefly of the stuff which was left after building the house. - - -

For more than five years I maintained myself thus solely by the labor of my hands, and I found, that by working about six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living. The whole of my winters, as well as most of my summers, I had free and clear for study. I have thoroughly tried school-keeping, and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income, for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe, accordingly, and I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the good of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade; but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil. I was actually afraid that I might by that time be doing what is called a good business. When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries; that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice,—for my greatest skill has been to want but little,—so little capital it required, so little distraction from my wonted moods, I foolishly thought. While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions, I contemplated this occupation as most like theirs; ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way, and thereafter carelessly dispose of them; so, to keep the flocks of Admetus.² I also dreamed that I might gather the wild herbs, or carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods, even to the city, by hay-cart loads. But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles; and though you trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.

As I preferred some things to others, and especially valued my freedom, as I could fare hard and yet succeed well, I did not wish to spend my time in earning rich carpets or other fine furniture, or delicate cookery, or a house in the Grecian or the Gothic style just yet. If there are any to whom it is no interruption to acquire these things, and who know how to use them

² Apollo once kept the flocks of King Admetus.

when acquired, I relinquish to them the pursuit. Some are "industrious," and appear to love labor for its own sake, or perhaps because it keeps them out of worse mischief; to such I have at present nothing to say. Those who would not know what to do with more leisure than they now enjoy, I might advise to work twice as hard as they do,—work till they pay for themselves, and get their free papers. For myself I found that the occupation of a day-laborer was the most independent of any, especially as it required only thirty or forty days in a year to support one. The laborer's day ends with the going down of the sun, and he is then free to devote himself to his chosen pursuit, independent of his labor; but his employer, who speculates from month to month, has no respite from one end of the year to the other.

In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely; as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial. It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do. - - -

II. WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which

passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within-doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to

hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill-top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy

in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;—

*"There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by."*

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening

hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly-acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular

picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must

be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go on tinkering upon our lives to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in

time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus's dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life (I wrote this some years ago) that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steam-boat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do

you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state of ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: "What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggletail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, "Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would

steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

5 If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and

will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in

our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and forepaws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

XVIII. CONCLUSION

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some

things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In

5 proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.³ - - -

³ It should be evident to any one who has read these selections from *Walden* that the following well-known passage in Lowell's essay on Thoreau was not based on a real understanding of Thoreau's reasons for living at Walden: "His shanty life was a mere impossibility, so far as his own conception of it goes, as an entire independency of mankind. The tub of Diogenes had a sounder bottom. Thoreau's experiment actually presupposed all that complicated civilization which it theoretically abjured. He squatted on another man's [Emerson's] land; he borrows an ax; his boards, his nails, his bricks, his mortar, his books, his lamp, his fish-hooks, his plough, his hoe, all turn state's evidence against him as an accomplice in the sin of that artificial civilization which rendered it possible that such a person as Henry D. Thoreau should exist at all."

V

*THE
RISE OF
REALISM*

1870 - 1914

THE RISE OF REALISM

1870 - 1914

Out of the provincialism of the Concord of Emerson and Thoreau, where the whole life of man was spun out in a narrow, intimate, personal series of relationships, there was to appear Pittsburgh: great, noisy, smoky city, with its showy millionaires, its hordes of unskilled laborers, its great extremes of wealth and poverty. Pittsburgh, fifty years after Concord, typified the new America. . . .

—LOUIS M. HACKER AND BENJAMIN B. KENDRICK, *The United States since 1865* (1932), p. 183

The Civil War obviously marks the close of one important period in American history and the beginning of another. Only less obvious is the break in our literature which occurs soon after the close of the war. By 1870 the work of the older writers was practically complete, and new writers with different backgrounds and very different literary aims were beginning to occupy the field. Nearly all the important tendencies of twentieth-century literature have their beginnings in the years 1870–1914. In many ways, in fact, the years following 1914 are but a continuation of the earlier period.

I

The political activities of the years 1870–1914 seem on the whole less significant than those of earlier times, and the political writings of Americans in this period compare unfavorably with those of the Revolutionary period. Until after 1900, the South, which had furnished many political leaders, had almost no voice in national politics. In the North and the West business and not politics attracted, as it still attracts, most of the young men of talent and ambition. If we except Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, and the two Roosevelts, few if any of our later Presidents measure up to the level of the earlier Presidents or to that of the average British prime minister. Grant was a great military leader, but his eight years in the White House mark the nadir of our political life. The decade following the close of the Civil War is the least attractive in American history. Note the names which have been given to it by various writers: Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age*; Don Seitz, *The Dreadful Decade*; Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era*; Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades*, etc. What surprises the present-day student is that so few of the prominent writers of the time raised their voices in protest.

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

The story of Reconstruction in the South, vividly told in Claude G. Bowers's *The Tragic Era*, contrasts painfully with the constructive work of American statesmen in the years following the Revolution. Andrew Johnson—whom historians and biographers have recently rehabilitated—tried to carry out Lincoln's wise and humane policy; but narrow and vindictive men, like Thaddeus Stevens, dictated the ill-advised policy which was actually followed. With the ablest and best men in the South disfranchised, Southern scalawags, impractical Northern idealists, and rascally carpet-baggers created a worse situation than the war itself had left. The Reconstruction régime alienated the blacks from their former masters and left the Southern states deeper in debt than they had been in 1865. In his *Battle-Pieces* (1866) Herman Melville included a prose Supplement, which contains wiser suggestions for Reconstruction than came from any statesman except Lincoln. It was not until about 1905 that the taxable property of the seceded states had risen to its 1860 level. The best energies of the South went into developing its agriculture and manufacturers rather than into politics. In spite of its comparative poverty, the new South experienced something like a literary renaissance after 1875.

If we view the political state of the nation as a whole, we are struck by the fact that there was more widespread incompetence and corruption than ever before. Under the still dominant *laissez-faire* theory, national, state, and city governments lent themselves to exploitation by commercial interests. The larger cities fell into the hands of bosses and corrupt rings, which cared little for the real interests of the citizens. The Industrial Revolution had created political problems which were hardly understood until a new generation of political leaders had grown up. Under the leadership of Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, and Theodore Roosevelt, the newly developed social conscience of the people finally began to express itself in political action. Lincoln Steffens and other "muck-rakers" revealed to a complacent public the rottenness of its city governments. The old conception of frontier individualism began—very slowly—to give way to the new idea that government must regulate commerce and industry. Men began to feel that political liberty was not enough—that the greatest threat to democracy was economic. The old idea, advocated by Jefferson and Emerson, that the best government is that which governs least, gradually gave way—as it is still giving way—to the conviction that the central government must regulate nearly every phase of the nation's life. The new attitude is found in Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1879), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1887), Howells's *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894), and in Hamlin Garland's *Main Travelled Roads* (1891).

Just before the close of the century, the brief war with Spain—which sensational newspapers had done much to precipitate—revealed a new nation in which South and North were again one in feeling and action. The war also showed Americans and Europeans alike that the United States had become a world power. The annexation of Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands marks the last stage in American territorial expansion, but jingoistic talk of America's "manifest destiny" had by no means come to an end. The war with the revolting Filipinos provoked some bitter protests from American writers who felt that the United States had betrayed the ideals of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. Vigorous protests appear in the letters of Howells and Mark Twain and in William Vaughn Moody's fine "Ode in Time of Hesitation," with its concluding line addressed to the nation's leaders:

"Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite."

II

Since 1870 economic factors have come to seem more important than the political. The realization of this fact has greatly influenced the interpretation of the past as well as the present. Even literary history is now often seen in economic terms. After Professor E. R. A. Seligman, of Columbia University, had published *The Economic Interpretation of History*, his colleague, Brander Matthews, read to the Modern Language Association an address upon "The Economic Interpretation of Literary History" (published in *Gateways to Literature*).

During and after the Civil War the Industrial (or economic) Revolution proceeded with such rapidity that men and women often found it difficult to readjust themselves to changed conditions. "In 1860," says S. E. Morison, "the average American was a yeoman farmer; since 1900 he has been an employee." The change carried with it an alteration in the national psychology if not, indeed, in the national character. By the end of the century the United States was practically the industrial, urban America that we live in today. The machine age had arrived. The years since 1870 have been an age of coal, iron, steel, steam, electricity, of railroads, manufactures, corporations, of invention, applied science, and mass production. With these came a rapidly increasing uniformity of life. By 1914 had come the first airplane, the automobile, the electric railway, the typewriter, the linotype machine, the telephone, the phonograph, the motion picture, etc. When these modern conveniences had once been used, it seemed impossible to live without them. A shift in the population was taking place; the cities were rapidly growing, while in many places the population of small towns and rural districts was declining. All such changes, however, seemed to most Americans signs of progress. Only a few shared the feelings of Lowell, who spoke in 1884 of "the change (to me a sad one) from an agricultural to a proletary population." There was little criticism of the Industrial Revolution. America had no Carlyle, no Ruskin, no Morris. There was no such protest as the belated one which came from the South in *I'll Take My Stand* (1930).

Greatly increased opportunities for making money quickly resulted in the development of a newly rich class very different from the old merchant aristocracy of the North or the large planters of the Old South. The methods by which large fortunes were accumulated by the "robber barons," as Matthew Josephson has called them, are now mainly illegal. It should be noted, however, that American millionaires, like Carnegie and Rockefeller, gave away most of their money to charities and educational institutions in a manner without parallel in other nations. The influence of the plutocracy upon American ideals was very great. In Howells's *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894), the banker answers his own query: "What should you say was our ideal of greatness?"

"Well, it is a very curious inquiry, and I have thought it over a good deal. I should say that within a generation our ideal had changed twice. Before the war, and during all the time from the Revolution onward, it was undoubtedly the great politician, the publicist, the statesman. As we grew older and began to have an intellectual life of our own, I think the literary fellows had a pretty good share of the honors that were going; that is, such a man as Longfellow was popularly considered a type of greatness. When the war came, it brought the soldier to the front, and there was a period of ten or fifteen years when he dominated the national imagination. That period passed, and the great era of national prosperity set in. The big fortunes began to tower up, and heroes of another sort began to appeal

to our administration. I don't think there is any doubt but the millionaire is now the American ideal. It isn't very pleasant to think so, even for people who have got on, but it can't very hopefully be denied. It is the man with the most money who now takes the prize in our national cake-walk."

While the rich were growing richer and the middle class more numerous and more prosperous, there was a new and increasing class of the poor as well. Every city had its slum population, its horrible tenement houses, its sweatshops, its problems of sanitation and child labor. The numerous immigrants, now coming chiefly from the south and east of Europe, were—since the free land in the West was practically gone—not easily Americanized. Unskilled laborers, who worked in mines and factories, lived in districts where the English language was seldom heard. Periodically, the extent of unemployment became alarming; and in spite of growing philanthropic activities, thousands lived on the verge of starvation. With the specialization demanded by an industrial régime, men could no longer shift quickly in time of stress from one occupation to another. The laboring population, feeling that it was not getting its share of the national prosperity, began depending more and more upon organization and strikes. A new class feeling was developing—the antipathy between labor and capital. It was an age of problems, but most Americans were optimistic enough to look for a speedy solution. Reformers, like Henry George and Edward Bellamy, relied too much upon their own panaceas. Most of the problems of the period are still with us in the twentieth century.

Americans who visited other countries did not always view their own land with the complacent optimism seen in Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*. Lafcadio Hearn, living in Japan, wrote to Ellwood Hendrick in May, 1896: "What is the present matter with American civilization? Nearly all the clever American authors seem to be women, and most of them have to go 'out of town' for their studies of life. American city-life seems to wither and burn up everything." George E. Woodberry wrote to John Erskine from Beverly, Massachusetts, on May 18, 1911:

"... since I have been much abroad, I have come to think of America as a backward nation, in all those things that are in a region above the material and mechanical parts of life and civilization. I think we lack ideas and emotions of the sort that forge greatness in spiritual ways—both as a nation and as individuals. . . . The democracy in which I was bred was of the souls of men; but the fruit here seems to be of their bodies—comfort and mechanical convenience—admirable but not what we most believed in. And for that other unfulfilled side—what a spectacle of Money (with a big 'M'), of material conflict at what a cost of life truly considered, what an anathema of ideal ends as such, what a destruction of our universities in the interests of 'vocation,' what a re-affirmation of the god-ruled necessity of servile classes, what heartless indifference to justice and happiness in the outcast mass, what an increase of this outcast mass of the 'colored peoples'—and so on!"

III

Under the stimulus of industrial activity, the tempo of American life seemed again to quicken. To foreign observers, it seemed that every American worked under higher pressure than his father had done. More than ever, it seemed, the American lived in the present—even in the South, where the memory of past glories and recent defeats was still strong. As time

passed, each generation seemed to have a weaker sense of the past than its predecessor had had. The newspapers and magazines were greatly influenced by—and catered to—this love of the contemporaneous. There was little appreciation of the fact that the present grows out of the past and that developments in America are sometimes determined by what happened across the Atlantic centuries ago.

More persons were able to read and write than ever before, but a smaller percentage possessed any real culture or taste. The middle class—perhaps one should say the lower middle class—gave the tone to thinking, conversation, and writing. The chief characteristics of the American middle class—as analyzed in Howard Mumford Jones's *America and French Culture* (1927)—are respectability, the Poor Richard virtues, ambition, a narrow religious outlook, sentimentality, fondness for the didactic. There was a marked decline in taste, and the taste of the age was bad in architecture, music, dress, and in literature. The average American cared more for the didactic and sentimental novels of the Rev. E. P. Roe—the Harold Bell Wright of the period—than it cared for the carefully written realistic studies of William Dean Howells. The reading public was expanding rapidly, but most rapidly on the sub-literary level. As in our time, “low-brow literature” bulked increasingly large. It was the day of the dime novel. Many a representative of some historic New England family must have felt as did Sarah Orne Jewett when she wrote to a friend in Edinburgh: “The serious talk about the cheap side of American life just now is not at all too severe, but we must look on with what patience we can at the doings of those who have no inherited sense or discretion in the use of money: as a wise old friend said to me not long ago, their grandparents or even their own parents went hungry and ill clothed, and it will take some time for these people to have their flings, and to eat all they want and to wear fine raiment, and flaunt authority. They must get to a state, and by slow stages too, where there is going to be something fit for education.”

The position of woman was rapidly changing. Many men were still insisting that woman's place was “in the home”; but invention and applied science had relieved thousands of women of the household drudgery of their grandmothers, and more and more they were demanding the right to work at occupations hitherto open only to men. They demanded also the right to vote, which Whittier and Emerson had advocated long before. Most of the arguments advanced against woman suffrage seem ridiculous now, but so also do some of the predicted benefits. Women were being better educated, and in cultural matters their influence was greater than it had been before or perhaps since. So many women were writing and publishing books under their own names that a capable woman writer ceased to be regarded as an object of curiosity. In this period of women's literary clubs, there was some speculation—as there still is—concerning the influence of women readers upon literature. Fiction had come to be written primarily for women, especially young women. Novelists who wished to write for mature men and women found themselves under the necessity—real or fancied—of spinning love tales for the American girl. A Norwegian-born novelist, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, commented upon the greater freedom of the European novelist and asked: “In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?” When, however, one notes what young women of the twentieth century have read with approval, one does not feel so certain that the Young Girl was responsible for the prudishness of fiction in the 'eighties and 'nineties.

IV

The period was characterized by a strong and growing faith in education. Many states, following the lead of Massachusetts in 1834, passed compulsory education laws. Vassar College, founded in 1865, was one of the first important colleges for women. The rising state universities of the West opened their doors to women on much the same terms as to men. By the end of the period (1914), the time seemed approaching when every American would be able to read and write. The average cultural level of the nation was higher, but this result was sometimes felt to have been accomplished at the expense of the chosen few. James Bryce wrote in the *American Commonwealth*, first published in 1888:

"There is certainly a great deal of intellect current in the United States. But it is chiefly devoted to business, that is, to railways, to finance, to commerce, to inventions, to manufactures (as well as to practical professions like law), things which play a relatively larger part than in Europe, as subjects of universal attention and discussion. There is abundance of sound culture, but it is so scattered about in divers places and among small groups which seldom meet one another, that no large cultural society has arisen similar to that of European capitals or to that which her universities have created for Germany. In Boston twenty years ago a host could have brought together round his table nine men as interesting as Paris or London would have furnished. But a similar party of eighteen could not have been collected, nor perhaps even the nine, anywhere except in Boston. . . . The atmosphere is not charged with ideas as it is in Germany, nor with critical *finesse* as in France. Stimulative, it is, but the stimulus drives eager youth away from the groves of the Muses into the struggling throng of the market-place."

As school and college curricula were gradually expanded to make room for new subjects (Harvard had developed the elective system under C. W. Eliot), the emphasis shifted from the cultural to the practical, from the humanities to science and vocational studies. Latin and Greek were studied less and less and were being replaced by courses in English and modern languages. The whole conception of culture was changing. For centuries culture had implied an acquaintance with the literature and the history of the ancient world. Writers had assumed such an acquaintance on the part of their readers and had gone to Greece, Rome and Palestine for subjects, models, and illustrations. In this period, however, authors and teachers began to discover—what is only too evident today—that readers commonly fail to recognize the simplest allusions to Homer, Vergil, and the Bible. An editor of the now vanished *Century Magazine*, L. Frank Tooker, has written: "Certainly there is no longer a common literary mind. Make a Biblical allusion to-day to a group of educated young people, and you will read in their stare of incomprehension how far the Bible, in its merely literary aspect, is no longer a force to draw us together. An allusion to Dickens or Thackeray or Scott or George Eliot will serve equally well to prove the same contention. We scorn the past, and lose all perspective; and our best-sellers, exalted for the hour, having no hold on the common mind, vanish in the next."

A remarkable chapter in the history of American education deals with the development of postgraduate study in the universities. Until after the Civil War, Americans who wanted training in research had to go to Germany. The new development was due in part to a few

exceptionally able university presidents: Samuel Colt Gilman, of Johns Hopkins; Charles W. Eliot, of Harvard; and Andrew D. White, of Michigan and Cornell. A new generation of scholars enthusiastically took up research in various fields. They founded such organizations as the American Historical Association and the Modern Language Association, for the interchange of ideas and discoveries. At Johns Hopkins, under the leadership of Herbert Adams, scholars began to restudy American history—a subject which, except for Francis Parkman—had not attracted our ablest historians. At Harvard there arose—something America had not known before—a notable group of philosophers, two of whom, William James and George Santayana, are of literary importance. Scholars in all fields were fascinated by the scientific method, which was applied somewhat too zealously to the study of literature. As President of the Modern Language Association, James Russell Lowell protested in vain against the excessive emphasis upon the linguistic study of literary masterpieces; and Edmund Clarence Stedman wrote in 1906: “If I had accepted any one of the Chairs of Literature which have been offered me, I certainly never should have taught poetry or other creative literature in the technical and pedantic fashion introduced from Germany by our multitudinous Ph.D’s.”

Before the Civil War, English literature had occupied a negligible place in the college curriculum, and American literature practically no place at all. Even in the British universities, English literature was neglected—longer than in America. Thomas R. Lounsbury (Yale, '59), who taught English for many years at Yale, once told Brander Matthews that during his undergraduate years he “never heard the name of any author of our language.” At Columbia Brander Matthews, of the class of 1871, had just one term in the history of English literature, but he was not introduced to the work of any author or told to read any literature for himself. Among the notable early teachers of English were Lounsbury, Matthews, Francis James Child at Harvard, and Thomas Randolph Price at Virginia and Columbia. The predecessors of such men were too often retired clergymen, who treated literature as a means of instruction in morals. The English teachers of the new type were trained in German methods of research. If they overstressed philology in their teaching and paid little attention to literature since the death of Shakespeare, it was because the Germans were chiefly interested in philology and in early English literature. It was not the fashion in those days to study contemporary literature or history. In 1895 a committee of the National Education Association declared that the study of American history should end with the formation of the federal Constitution. As late as 1903, Professor W. P. Trent closed his *History of American Literature* with the year 1865.

The study of American literature lagged behind that of English literature. If it had only been taught in those days in German universities, the situation would have been different. The popular disposition was to overrate American authors, but in the universities the old Federalist attitude was still strong: why use American literature if the British product was better? In 1876 Bayard Taylor wrote: “There is not yet a chair of American Literature in any of our Colleges or Universities.” Before the 'seventies were past, however, at least two pioneer investigators had begun to publish their findings. These were Moses Coit Tyler, of Michigan and Cornell, and Charles F. Richardson, of Dartmouth. These scholars were not content with such old-fashioned works as Griswold's *The Poets and Poetry of America* (1842) or the Duyckincks' *Cyclopædia of American Literature* (1855). (See the Bibliography for literary histories

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published in this period; and see also Howard Mumford Jones, *The Life of Moses Coit Tyler*, 1933, and Fred Lewis Pattee, "American Literature in the College Curriculum," *Educational Review*, LXVII, 266-272, May, 1924.)

The sciences were coming to occupy a larger and larger place not only in the curriculum of high school and college but in American life and thought. Inventions based in large part on scientific discoveries were now rapidly transforming our way of life and contributing to the breakdown of older habits of living. American writers of this period did not as a rule share the keen interest in science which had characterized Emerson, Holmes, and Whitman. Too often the writer and the artist felt that the popular regard for the scientist had become almost a superstition. The English poet and critic, A. C. Swinburne, wrote in *Under the Microscope* (1872):

"We live in an age when not to be scientific is to be nothing; the man untrained in science, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though he should know all that man may know of the history of men and their works in time past, though he should have nourished on the study of their noblest examples in art and literature whatever he may have of natural intelligence, is but a pitiable and worthless pretender in the sight of professors to whom natural science is not a mean but an end; not an instrument of priceless worth for the mental workman, but a result in itself satisfying and final, a substitute in place of an auxiliary, a sovereign in lieu of an ally, a goal instead of a chariot."

There was widespread discussion of the Darwinian theory of evolution, a theory which proved as profoundly influential as the discoveries of Copernicus and Newton. Although it was vigorously challenged by some religious leaders, the theory slowly won its way to acceptance by educated people. In the lay mind the theory was interpreted to fit the general belief in the inevitability of progress. The most conspicuous American champion of evolution was John Fiske, but English Darwinians, like Thomas Henry Huxley and Herbert Spencer, visited America, partly at least in behalf of the cause. Whitman was not disturbed by the evolutionary theory, but Lowell and Melville found it hard to accept.

Many Protestants were alarmed by the great increase in the number of Roman Catholics, which was due primarily to the stream of immigrants coming from Catholic countries. By 1900 there were nine million Catholics in the United States. The weakening of what one may call the Puritan tradition in the Protestant churches went steadily on throughout the period. Popular and progressive ministers like Phillips Brooks and Henry Ward Beecher talked less about hell and theology and more about social service. At the same time Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey held thousands of revivals and made many converts, mainly from the lower classes. On the whole, it has seemed to the historians that since 1870 religious influences have counted for less than in any earlier period.

v

Those who wrote and those who published books relied for their living on the numerous middle classes, but musicians, painters, sculptors, and architects had to look to the somewhat uncertain patronage of the wealthy. There was in the rapidly growing cities of the North and the Middle West much more wealth than in any preceding period. Some men had made

fortunes out of war contracts; others, in manufacturing, investments, banking, in railroads, or in commerce. The older aristocracy, like the upper New York circle portrayed in the novels of Edith Wharton, was declining; and the new rich often spent their money on art objects which now seem ludicrous or horrible. Although there were many wealthy men, there were few rich men of leisure and good taste. The idle rich generally lived abroad, for in America men who did not work were made to feel uncomfortable. It was chiefly the wives and daughters of the rich who spent money on the arts. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) Thorstein Veblen argues somewhat cynically that the wealthy feel impelled to spend their money lavishly and conspicuously on pursuits or objects which have no practical value. In *The Saga of American Society* (1937) Dixon Wecter has noted that support of the fine arts, especially the opera, was one means by which Society sought to justify itself. In this period of social and economic unrest American millionaires gave away their money to philanthropic, educational, and artistic organizations with a lavish generosity unrivaled by any European aristocracy. Millions were given to endow universities, libraries, museums, art schools, and fellowships. The bequests of Rockefeller, Carnegie, Morgan, Stanford, and Huntington were the most conspicuous, but there were many others—particularly before the time when income taxes began to take a major portion of the earnings of the wealthy. Not all the wealthy were without education or taste, and the many who went abroad to see the great cathedrals and museums learned something about standards in Europe. It was fashionable to indulge a passion for collecting; and, to the alarm of Europeans, discriminating Americans brought to this country paintings of the old and new masters, statuary, incunabula, and manuscripts of great writers, for which they had outbid European purchasers. Eventually, most of the great collections, like those of Morgan, Huntington, Folger, and Mellon, were given to the public. Living American artists perhaps had cause to complain that Society did comparatively little to support them, but there was a large increase in the number of musicians, painters, and architects. The notable improvement in the social position of the artist was in part no doubt a result of the changed situation in Europe. The great musician, for example, expected far better treatment at the hands of society than had been given to Mozart, whom the Archbishop of Salzburg had kicked around as he would any other servant in his household.

American art schools were in many cases now adequate to the training of painters and musicians, and yet many young artists went to Europe for their training. Some of them, notably James McNeill Whistler, remained in Europe, but the majority returned to their own country. The demand for a national literature had its parallel in the attempt to make the fine arts in some sense distinctively American. In this period came the first important attempts to collect the folk songs of American Negroes, cowboys, and Indians. Dvořák while in this country felt that American music should be built largely upon such materials, but he did not realize how much more foreign such music is to most American composers than the folk songs of Czechoslovakia were to him.

Before this period Americans could not be described as a music-loving nation, but these years saw the foundation laid for the nation-wide love of opera and orchestral music so conspicuous today when American cities are better supplied with music than any others in the world. A partial explanation of the change may be the coming to this country of music-loving immigrants from Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and other countries. There was in this period much teaching of music. The ability to play or sing, however, was valued chiefly as an

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accomplishment in young women; and, apart from Edward MacDowell and a few others, there were no notable composers. Even MacDowell, though he made use of American materials, impressed some of his critics as belonging to the German school of music. Among the accomplished European musicians who spent some time in this country were three important composers: Delius, Tschaikowsky, and Dvořák, who paid tribute to America in his symphony, "From the New World."

In painting, the American achievement was more substantial. George Inness and Homer Martin were more accomplished artists than the Hudson River School, whose work they continued. Other notable painters were: John Sargent, fashionable maker of portraits, who spent much of his life in Europe; Winslow Homer, who painted the sea and the Maine coast; Albert Ryder, a painter of dreams whose most famous picture is "Death on the Race Track"; Thomas Eakins, a realist, who painted the most notable portrait of Walt Whitman; and John La Farge, a versatile artist, who helped Henry Adams in his study of the cathedral of Chartres and visited the South Seas with him. A lesser painter, Frederic Remington, interpreted the West as he found it on the Great Plains and in the Rocky Mountains.

Emerson had thought sculpture an obsolete art, but time has proved him in this respect a poor prophet. Sculptors found employment in satisfying the public demand for statues of national and sectional heroes, particularly memorials to heroes of the Civil War. In nearly every county seat there is now a monument erected to the memory of soldiers of the Revolution, the Civil War, or the First World War. Our large cities are abundantly supplied with statues. Robert Moses thinks the great majority of those in New York City are bad, as perhaps they are, but they undoubtedly testify to a certain regard for art. Our greatest sculptor, the Irish-born Augustus Saint-Gaudens, created works that represent a high order of achievement. Among them are the Farragut and Sherman monuments in New York, the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in Boston, and the memorial in Washington to the wife of Henry Adams, who called it "The Peace of God." Saint-Gaudens's statue of Lincoln in Chicago contrasts strongly with the more realistic Lincoln of another notable sculptor, George Grey Barnard.

Among our architects the most original figures were Henry Hobson Richardson, who was at Harvard with Henry Adams; Louis H. Sullivan; and one of Sullivan's pupils, Frank Lloyd Wright, the best-known American architect of our time. Their ideal, as phrased by Wright, was that "a building should be made to grow easily from its site, shaped to harmonize with its surroundings of Nature." Structures erected by American engineers often command respect as works of art. The first notable example, the Brooklyn Bridge, built by John Roebling and his son Washington, inspired a remarkable poem by Hart Crane, who saw in it an American symbol. The skyscraper, in the development of which many engineers and architects had a part, is, though it was formerly much ridiculed, one of America's distinctive artistic achievements.

In the later nineteenth century there was a closer relation between artists and writers. Henry Adams, as we have noted, had friends among important painters. So also did Henry James, whose novels and short stories owe much to his intimate knowledge of art and artists. In *The Brown Decades* Lewis Mumford has suggested that in the 'seventies and 'eighties Thoreau and Whitman had a greater effect upon artists than upon writers. Whitman, he thinks, had an important influence upon Louis Sullivan and Thomas Eakins. He also suggests the influ-

ence of *Walden* upon the landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, who was largely responsible for the Boston park system, Central and Riverside parks in New York, the campuses of Stanford and the University of California, and the Capitol grounds in Washington. A notable example of the close relation of one art to another is found in Sidney Lanier, an accomplished musician whose poetry is fully understood only by lovers of both arts who are familiar with his poetic theories. Lanier perhaps made a mistake in trying in verse for effects that are attainable only in pure music. If so, he was only one of the many modern artists who have confused the boundaries separating the various arts. Nevertheless, writers have often found in the other arts suggestions which have enriched poetry, fiction, and drama. Many American writers, however, have suffered from their ignorance of the fine arts. In our college curriculum to this day literature is too often the only recognized representative of the arts.

VI

Men were slow to realize that a new literary epoch had arrived. In 1874 Edmund Clarence Stedman, a Connecticut-born poet, critic, and Wall Street broker, said in an interview: "The New England school of literature, centering in Boston, has been a brilliant one, marked by originality and power, but it has been a feature of a single generation, not destined to be succeeded by another of equal importance. Just as the literary metropolis shifted from Edinburgh to London, so now it is shifting from Boston to New York." Boston, however, would not yet believe it. Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote to Stedman from Boston: "Gad, these Bostonians are not thin-skinned on the subject—they haven't any skin at all!" Referring to Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, S. E. Morison says: "Immigration . . . diluted and industrialism dissolved a society that had made such men possible. New England ceased to be a state of mind, and became a mere group of states." Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Whittier lived on into the period we are discussing, but they had little to say to the new generation. In commenting upon the differences seen in American literature before and after the Civil War, Granville Hicks writes in *The Great Tradition* (1933):

"Now Hawthorne and Thoreau were dead, and Melville was about to sequester himself in the New York customhouse. Emerson remained, but even he, writing 'Terminus' in 1866, was and knew he was at the end of his creative days. Far worse than the departure of these men was the silence of their work amid the clamor of the age. What, after all, did self-reliance mean to Jay Gould and Commodore Vanderbilt? What could it mean to young girls in New York sweat shops? Could Thoreau's account of his life at Walden be taken as a guide-book by a generation that had committed itself, or been committed, to the frantic multiplications of the machine? Were Melville's records of lands beyond the grasp of industrialism the proper inspiration for young men whose eyes were focussed on the march of steel rails and whose ears were tuned to the hum of engines? Could one find in Hawthorne's subtle analyses of sin any clue to the demoralization of a nation? These men were the consummation of an epoch that, by 1865, was ended. Though it was in their day that industrialism was gathering its forces for the decisive conflict and the ultimate victory, their roots were in a different soil, and the fruit they bore could never grow again."

Other provincial literary centers proved less permanent than Boston. The Civil War had practically ended the literary activities of the Charleston group. In the 'seventies San Francisco

fell behind when Mark Twain and Bret Harte came east. Somewhat later Hamlin Garland worked to make a literary center of Chicago, but in the end confessed the attempt was a failure. Howells gave up editing the *Atlantic* in 1881 and four years later moved from Boston to New York. New York had become the publishing center of the land—a literary market if not a genuine capital like London and Paris. During this period, however, the production of literature was more and more in the hands of the West and the South. The situation was anomalous, as it still is. The passing of provincial cultures seems unfortunate in a country so large and so geographically varied as the United States.

The publishing of books had become a business like any other—except of course that, like the producer of plays, the publisher is less sure of the commercial value of his purchases than most business men. Among the notable new publishing houses were Charles Scribner's Sons, Henry Holt and Company, and in Boston the Houghton Mifflin Company, successors in a sense to Ticknor and Fields. For a decade or two after the war much of the publishing business was in the hands of firms which sold only by subscription. The American Publishing Company, of Hartford, Connecticut, sold thirty-one thousand copies of *Innocents Abroad* in five months. Gradually, however, by modern business methods the New York publishers greatly increased the numbers of books published and sold. By the end of the period the large publishing house with international affiliations was an established feature. The Literary Guild and the Book-of-the-Month Club, however, were still to come. The enactment of an International Copyright Law in 1891 proved a boon to American authors. No longer was it possible for publishers to reprint popular new British novels without the payment of royalty to the British author. The law also stopped the pirating by British and Canadian publishers of new American books. Since 1891 there has been a great growth in the number of American novels and plays, and literature has furnished a livelihood for larger numbers of men and women. Many authors who have achieved financial success, however, have done so by appealing to readers on the sub-literary level.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was in a sense the golden age of the American literary magazine. With the exception of the *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston and the *Overland Monthly* in San Francisco, nearly all the better magazines were published in New York. There was a great expansion in the magazine-reading public and hence an increase in the pay to contributors. To take an extreme example, the *Atlantic Monthly* paid Bret Harte in a single year ten thousand dollars for whatever he might write for the magazine. Perhaps all of Poe's earnings as editor and contributor never amounted to so large a sum as that. Among the better magazines we mention the *New York Nation*, a liberal weekly founded by E. L. Godkin in 1865; *Harper's Magazine*, founded in 1850 and edited for half a century after 1869 by Henry Mills Alden; and *Scribner's Magazine*, founded in 1887. Perhaps more influential than any one of these was *Scribner's Monthly*, founded in 1870, which in 1881 became the *Century Magazine*. It was founded by Roswell Smith, a shrewd business man, and Josiah Gilbert Holland, a clergyman who developed into an able journalist and popular writer. As editor, Holland was fortunate enough to have as his associate one of the best magazinists of the period, Richard Watson Gilder, who seems to have taken over most of the editorial responsibility even before 1881, when he became editor. Holland and Gilder made a special appeal to Southern and Western readers and writers—something Poe had wished to do a generation before. They sent Edward King on the long journey which resulted in a series of articles and a book entitled *The*

Great South. While in New Orleans, King sent to *Scribner's Monthly* some of the early stories of the then unknown George W. Cable. Although Gilder was, with reservations, an admirer of Whitman's poetry, he published very little of it; and Holland was reluctant to publish even Stedman's judicial essay on Whitman. From the point of view of the modern reader, *Scribner's Monthly*, like *Harper's* and the *Atlantic*, was too much influenced by what Santayana calls the "genteel tradition." Too many things were sacrificed to good taste. Even Mark Twain's works could not be published without being expurgated. One of the editors of the *Century*, L. Frank Tooker, writes in an illuminating book, *The Joys and Tribulations of an Editor*: "Indeed, it was the genial autumn of the Victorian age of literature, and we basked pleasantly in the golden glow of its rich fruitage. . . . And thus being comfortably assured in our own minds that we had arrived at the perfection of literary form, we were thoroughly resolved to keep our heritage unsoiled. The structure of the poem and the good taste of the short story or novel were bound by the rules of regularity as rigidly as the entasis of the columns of the Parthenon was governed by the formulæ of the craftsman who shaped them. Imagination and fertility of thought might be as dynamic as one chose, but form and good taste were static."

The *Atlantic Monthly* under Howells and Aldrich was somewhat less hospitable to outside contributors than the New York magazines, but as time passed it became less the organ of the New England writers and more of a national magazine. Its editors were: James Russell Lowell, 1857-1861; James T. Fields, 1861-1871; William Dean Howells, 1871-1881; Thomas Bailey Aldrich, 1881-1890; Horace E. Scudder, 1890-1898; Walter Hines Page, 1898-1899; Bliss Perry, 1899-1908; Ellery Sedgwick, 1908-1938; and Edward Weeks (1938-). When Page took charge of the *Atlantic* in 1898, one of his first steps was to empty the sacred tin box containing accepted manuscripts and return them to the authors. He had resolved to edit the magazine not for a particular group or section but for the American reading public. Returning a manuscript to Sarah Orne Jewett—one of the *Atlantic's* oldest contributors and one of the best stylists of the period—he wrote: "It would be easy to fill our volumes with papers about subjects that interest small groups of people. But if it is to be preserved, it must avoid this mistake, however much, by avoiding it, it may disappoint some of its best friends and become perhaps less interesting to them." Before long, Page left the *Atlantic* to found a new publishing house, for which he edited the *World's Work*, a periodical very unlike the *Atlantic Monthly*. About the same time the *Saturday Evening Post* acquired a new editor, George Horace Lorimer, under whose policy it proved more successful than any of its rivals in obtaining subscribers by the million. The tendency then as now was to make a magazine less a literary organ and more a medium for advertising. To obtain high-priced advertisements, the circulation manager must be able to prove a wide circulation on the newsstands or in the mails. The result was an appeal to readers of the sub-literary sort. Before Page began to "modernize" the *Atlantic*, there were other editors of the new type, like Edward Bok, who became editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1889, and Frank Munsey, who founded *Munsey's Magazine* in 1891. One of the most influential of the new magazine editors was S. S. McClure, who founded in 1893 the magazine which bore his name. In a chapter in *Roadside Meetings* (1930) entitled "Old Editors and New Magazines," Hamlin Garland quotes Sam McClure as saying to him: "Garland, you're on the wrong track. You despise journalism, but the journalist is the man who wins. . . . Drop your literary pose and come in with us." The result of the commercialistic pressure was that many authors compromised their literary ideals. In the end, says Garland, "I wrote for *McClure's*, but I continued to visit *The*

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Century's literary salon!" The influence of journalism—for good or for bad—is evident in the work of Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Booth Tarkington, George Ade, Theodore Dreiser, and many other writers from 1870 down to the present time.

VII

A most significant event in the history of the period was the literary emergence of the West. Before the Civil War nearly all our important books had come from a narrow strip along the Atlantic seaboard extending from Boston to Charleston. Since that time important writers have come from every section of the country. By 1890 the Superintendent of the Census had pronounced the frontier a thing of the past. The West was now largely a region of farmers and townsmen, many of whom were men and women with education and literary aspirations. Long before the Civil War Westerners had felt a certain jealousy of the intellectual supremacy of the East. Their attitude resembles that of ante-bellum Southerners or, indeed, that of all Americans in the days when Sydney Smith was asking, "Who reads an American book?" The demand for a sectional literature seems quite irrational to some critics, but it is a perfectly natural one. In a delightful essay entitled "A Stepdaughter of the Prairie," Margaret Lynn describes her girlhood on a Western prairie. She could see no connection between literature and life. If only the poets she loved had written of barbed wire, slough grass, and the nameless flowers she knew, life would have been more livable. Strange as it may seem, the New England poets seemed to her more remote than Tennyson. When Bret Harte wrote his stories of California, he said long afterwards, he was trying to help create a distinctive literature of the Pacific Coast. The attitude of the West was emphatically expressed in an editorial in the *Dial* (then published in Chicago) for October 1, 1893: "Mr. Lowell's famous essay 'On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners' is in need of a supplement. 'A Certain Condescension in Easterners' is a theme that calls for treatment in similar vein. . . . For many years past the attitude of Eastern writers towards literary activity in the West has been similar to that once assumed by Boston towards New York, and by England towards the United States. It has been an attitude of condescension, of patronizing counsel, of mild surprise that a region so far removed from the centre of the intellectual system should venture to have such things as literary aspirations."

It was Western humor and fiction that brought the West to the attention of the somewhat astonished East: Mark Twain's "Jumping Frog" story, Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "Plain Language from Truthful James," Eggleston's *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, and Hay's *Pike County Ballads*. The Eastern public was fascinated, but its literary leaders seldom approved without reservations. Edmund Clarence Stedman wrote to Bayard Taylor on September 16, 1873: "Cultured as are Hay and Harte, they are almost equally responsible with 'Josh Billings' and the 'Danbury News' man for the present *horrible* degeneracy of the public taste—that is, the taste of the newest generation of book-buyers. The whole country, owing to the *contagion* of our American newspaper 'exchange' system, is flooded, deluged, swamped, beneath a muddy tide of slang, vulgarity, inartistic bathos [bathos], impertinence and buffoonery that is not wit."

In 1877, at the Whittier Birthday Dinner, Brahmin Boston registered its most emphatic disapproval of Western humor when Mark Twain delivered his unfortunate burlesque. The literature of the West, whatever its artistic shortcomings, was more American than that of New

England had been. Beside Mark Twain, Longfellow seems European rather than American.

The Western writings which won the attention of the East were humorous and romantic, and they dealt largely with the frontier. The later work of the West is often grim and realistic, and it deals not with cowboys and forty-niners but with discontented farmers and the drab people of small towns. What Carl Van Doren terms "the revolt from the village" successively figures in E. W. Howe's *The Story of a Country Town* (1883), Mark Twain's "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1899), Willa Cather's "The Sculptor's Funeral" (1905), Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (1920). The most notable treatment of the Western farmer is found in Hamlin Garland's *Main Travelled Roads* (1891) and Frank Norris's *The Octopus* (1901). By 1900 the Middle West was not very different from the East, and Western novels of urban life—such as Norris's *The Pit* (1902), Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900)—are concerned with problems no longer peculiar to the cities of the East. The West was in process of becoming a second East, and the South a second North or Middle West. American life was becoming standardized, and it was difficult to distinguish the work of writers of the different sections.

Lee's surrender at Appomattox and the emancipation of the slaves helped to make the South an integral economic part of the nation. Defeat and Reconstruction, however, left the South somewhat bitter for many years after the close of the war. The South was almost impoverished; not until long after 1865 did the tax value of Southern property rise to what it had been in 1860. The large planters suffered most, and eventually most of them left their plantations and settled in the cities or tried their fortunes in the North or West. The South became a section of small farmers. Slowly it recovered something of its ante-bellum prosperity, but the distinctive qualities of Southern life were yielding place to general American characteristics.

The mind of the New South was a curious compound of the reminiscent and the practical. The post-war generation was improving its economic position by the adoption of Northern methods in agriculture and manufacturing, but it greatly idealized the patriarchal slave régime. The South was at this time slower to tolerate criticism of its way of life than any other section of the country. Cable's treatment of the Negro question made him anathema to most Southerners. By the end of the century the situation had changed sufficiently for Ellen Glasgow to write of Southern life with the same honesty and frankness which characterize her later novels.

Older Southern authors who survived the Civil War produced little of importance. Timrod died in 1867 and Simms in 1870; Hayne lived on until 1886. John Esten Cooke continued to write melodramatic historical romances, none of which comes up to his *The Virginia Comedians* (1854). Sidney Lanier, of a later generation, made a brave fight against disease and poverty and in a few brief years of his maturity produced a handful of notable poems. Apart from Lanier, the best work of the New South was done in prose fiction. Following the lead of Bret Harte, who had revealed California to the nation, Southern writers began to exploit the picturesque backgrounds and types of that varied section. Cable wrote of the Creoles of New Orleans, Irwin Russell and Joel Chandler Harris of the old plantation Negro, Thomas Nelson Page of the Virginia planter, James Lane Allen of the Bluegrass region of Kentucky, and Charles Egbert Craddock (Mary Noailles Murfree) of the Tennessee mountaineer. The South

was a rich field for the local colorist, and during the 'eighties and 'nineties Southern fiction enjoyed an unprecedented vogue.

With the rise of the literary West and South, the center of literary production moved far to the south and west of Boston. As we have already noted, few of the older New England writers produced notable work after 1870, with the exception of Lowell and Parkman. Of the younger New England writers, the most important were Emily Dickinson and—if they can be classed with New England—the James brothers. Some New England writers, like Thomas Bailey Aldrich, clung to the genteel, out-worn Romantic tradition; but others, like Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, followed the lead of Bret Harte and Harriet Beecher Stowe and wrote local-color stories. Miss Jewett's beautifully written descriptions of half-deserted seaport towns remind one of Southern stories describing the glories of the old régime before the Civil War. Mrs. Freeman's more realistic stories deal with the up-country New Englanders living in small towns or seeking a scanty living on rocky upland farms. The golden age of New England was past. Industrialism, emigration, and immigration had almost destroyed the solidarity of that section. But let no one—misled by the contemporary tendency to abuse that section—conclude that New England has not, even in later years, produced more than its proportionate share of our best books. The decline of New England was relative, not absolute.

VIII

In the half-century which elapsed between the close of the Civil War and the outbreak of the First World War, Romanticism slowly gave way before the rising tide of realism. By 1870 Romanticism had produced nearly all its important work, except in Whitman, Lanier, and Emily Dickinson; and it had lost touch with life. The local-color story, a blend of the realistic and the romantic, showed some vitality, but the poetry of Stedman, Taylor, and Aldrich in the main embodied a Romanticism gone to seed. In Europe Romanticism had long before given way to realism. While Hawthorne and Melville were writing their romances, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot had been writing novels colored by the realistic point of view. Tolstoy and Turgenev were realists, and the Russian fiction began to have an influence in this country. The English literary influence was now perhaps less important than that of Russia or France. In the latter country realism of the type represented by Balzac gave place to the "naturalism" exemplified in the novels of Zola.

Realism is as difficult to define as Romanticism. It was in part a reaction against the abuses of Romanticism—a protest against a literary point of view which was outmoded. Influenced partly by the development of science, the realists endeavored to portray the typical, even if it were commonplace or ugly. (See, for example, Chapter XVII of George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.) In part realism represented a protest against shallow optimism and prudishness. It called attention to unpleasant aspects of life which the Romanticists had overlooked. Realism had naturally a certain connection with reform, and it often dealt with social and other problems. A good statement of the realistic creed is found in Howells's *Criticism and Fiction*. The leading exponents of American realism were William Dean Howells, Henry James, Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, and, toward the end of the period, Theodore Dreiser.

The realism of Howells was the realism which dealt with the typical and the commonplace; it carefully avoided the abnormal and shunned the naturalistic treatment of sex so obvious in Dreiser and in Zola.

A reviewer wrote in *Harper's Magazine* for July, 1879: "Of Emile Zola's *L'Assommoir* the less said the better. A revelation of the most revolting phases of low Parisian life, its atmosphere is loaded with moral contagion. Its impure pictures may be life-like, but so would be the reproduction of a cancerous sore, or of a scrofulous ulcer. . . ."

IX

In this period the writings of American authors seem more national than before the Civil War; and yet, with improved means of communication and transportation, literary influences from Europe were felt more quickly than ever. Americans became better acquainted with the work of the Continental writers, especially those from Russia and the Scandinavian countries. Literature seemed becoming more international than ever before. Edmund Gosse notes as "a proof of the immense growth of Ibsen's celebrity that editions of *Hedda Gabler* were called for almost simultaneously, in the winter of 1890, in London, New York, St. Petersburg, Leipzig, Berlin and Moscow, as well as in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Christiania." The establishment of branches of English and American publishing houses in New York and London facilitated the interchange of books.

More and more Americans were visiting Europe, and many were living there temporarily or permanently. Henry James, Bret Harte, and Henry Harland, editor of the *Yellow Book*, spent their last years in England. Francis Marion Crawford, the novelist, spent most of his life on the Continent. Lowell, Mark Twain, and Ambrose Bierce paid long visits to England. Harte, Lowell, Bayard Taylor, George Henry Boker, and other writers held diplomatic appointments. Henry James found a subject suited to his pen in the numerous American tourists and exiles. At the same time more Europeans than ever were visiting the United States. Kipling and Stevenson, both of whom married Americans, spent some time in the United States. George Gissing wrote some of his earliest stories while living in Chicago. Oscar Wilde made a widely publicized tour of this country, and Matthew Arnold lectured to American audiences. More and more the British author—especially after the adoption of the International Copyright Law in 1891—realized that a large part of his reading public was to be found on this side of the Atlantic. Often an English writer's book sold more widely in this country than in his own.

The outcome of the Civil War, as we have noted, increased the respect of England for America. "Till after our Civil War," remarked Lowell, "it never seemed to enter the head of any foreigner, especially of any Englishman, that an American had what could be called a country, except as a place to eat, sleep, and trade in. Then it seemed to strike them suddenly. 'By Jove, you know, fellahs don't fight like that for a shop-till!'" And yet, in spite of the continued development of England into a democracy, the old condescension toward America was strong. Lowell vigorously attacked it in "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners." Henry Adams, who was in England during the Civil War, wrote with feeling: "All through life, one had seen the American on his literary knees to the European; and all through many lives back for some two centuries, one had seen the European snub or patronize the American; not always intentionally, but effectually." John Ruskin wrote in 1874: "England taught the Americans all they have of speech or thought, hitherto. What thoughts they have not learned from England are foolish thoughts; what words they have not learned from England, unseemly words. . . ." In 1866 a gentleman from Liverpool offered to endow at the University of Cambridge a lectureship on American "history, literature, and institutions," with the stipulation

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that the lecturer should be nominated by the president and fellows of Harvard University. When the University senate met to consider the proposal, they began "bemoaning themselves about democracy"; and when it was discovered that Harvard had some sort of connection with the Unitarian Church, they voted down the proposal by 110 to 82. Nevertheless, when the first professorship of the English language and literature was established at Oxford, there were Englishmen who wished to nominate Lowell for the position. All through the nineteenth century Englishmen tended to look at the United States either, like Michael Drayton, as a land of promise or, like Mrs. Trollope, as the abode of vulgarity. In general, it may be said that those who took the more favorable view were Scotchmen, radicals, or middle-class liberals, like John Bright. For the humorists, America was a stock subject for jokes. The following example is from Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* (1893):

LADY HUNSTANTON: . . . He [Arbuthnot] has just gone for a walk with our pretty American. She [Miss Worsley] is very pretty, is she not?

LADY CAROLINE: Far too pretty. These American girls carry off all the good matches. Why can't they stay in their own country? They are always telling us it is the Paradise of women.

LORD ILLINGWORTH: It is, Lady Caroline. That is why, like Eve, they are so extremely anxious to get out of it.

LADY CAROLINE: Who are Miss Worsley's parents?

LADY ILLINGWORTH: American women are wonderfully clever in concealing their parents.

LADY HUNSTANTON: My dear Lord Illingworth, what do you mean? Miss Worsley, Caroline, is an orphan. Her father was a very wealthy millionaire, or philanthropist, or both, I believe, who entertained my son quite hospitably, when he visited Boston. I don't know how he made his money, originally.

KELVIL: I fancy in American dry goods.

LADY HUNSTANTON: What are American dry goods?

LORD ILLINGWORTH: American novels.

LADY HUNSTANTON: How very singular—Well, from whatever source her large fortune came, I have a great esteem for Miss Worsley. She dresses exceedingly well. All Americans do dress well. They get their clothes in Paris.

MRS. ALLONBY: They say, Lady Hunstanton, that when good Americans die they go to Paris.

LADY HUNSTANTON: Indeed? And when bad Americans die, where do they go?

LORD ILLINGWORTH: Oh, they go to America.

KELVIL: I am afraid you don't appreciate America, Lord Illingworth. It is a very remarkable country, especially considering its youth.

LORD ILLINGWORTH: The youth of America is their oldest tradition. It has been going on now for three hundred years. To hear them talk one would imagine they were in their first childhood. As far as civilisation goes they are in their second.

"For some reason or other," says Lowell, "the European has rarely been able to see America except in caricature." An exception must be made of Matthew Arnold, whose "Civilization in the United States" is given in this volume. On the Continent notions of the United States were exceedingly vague. In an essay on "American in European Literature" Hjalmar Hjorth Boye-

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sen, reared in Norway, testifies: "I remember the time when, to the cultivated classes in Europe, America presented a picture not unlike the Greek conception of Hades. Life here was supposed to be devoid of all higher pleasures, dreary, and destitute of charm; but beyond this, the land was a shadow-land, and all ideas concerning it were hazy and indefinite." America was a land from which the European novelist brought home the benevolent and wealthy bachelor uncle and to which, as in Hugo's *Les Misérables*, he exiled his villain. It was the First World War which finally broke up—temporarily at least—the continental European's conception of America and led him to inquire concerning the nature of the shadowy land beyond the Atlantic which had sent men, money, and arms to the Old World to help turn back the German invasion of France and Belgium.

WALT WHITMAN

1819 - 1892

*Come Muse migrate from Greece and Ionia,
Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts,
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Æneas', Odysseus' wanderings,
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus,*

For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried domain awaits, demands you.

—WHITMAN, "Song of the Exposition."

*Camerado, this is no book,
Who touches this touches a man, . . .*

—WHITMAN, "So Long."

In one of the autobiographical passages in his *Specimen Days* Whitman writes:

" . . . I estimate three leading sources and formative stamps to my own character . . . and its subsequent literary and other out-growth—the maternal nativity-stock brought hither from far-away Netherlands, for one, (doubtless the best)—the subterranean tenacity and central bony structure (obstinacy, wilfulness) which I get from my paternal English elements, for another—and the combination of my Long Island birth-spot, sea-shores, childhood's scenes, absorptions, with teeming Brooklyn and New York—with, I suppose, my experiences afterward in the secession outbreak, for the third."

Walt(er) Whitman was born on May 31, 1819—in the same year as Lowell and Melville—on a farm near Huntington, Long Island. The family moved to Brooklyn in the early 'twenties. Whitman came of mixed stock—English, Dutch, and Welsh. One notes in him also a Quaker influence, discernible in his vocabulary and in a certain mystical outlook on life. The father was a carpenter, and Walt himself more than once followed the same trade. At eleven or twelve he was through with school. For the next twenty years, although he taught school and worked as a carpenter part of the time, he was more often setting type or writing for newspapers. He was not a college man, like most of the New England writers; but, like Howells, Harte, Harris, and Mark Twain, he came to literature by way of journalism. He was largely self-educated. He read much but rather indiscriminately. He did read Homer and Shakespeare, however, and he saw numerous plays and operas.

Much of his work is colored by recollections of the Long Island seashore. "The shores of this

bay, winter and summer, and my doings there in early life, are woven all through *L. of G.* [*Leaves of Grass*]." Again he writes in *Specimen Days*:

"As I write, the whole experience comes back to me after the lapse of forty or more years—the soothing rustle of the waves, and the saline smell—boyhood's times, the clam-digging, barefoot, and with trowsers roll'd up—hauling down the creek—the perfume of the sedge-meadows—the hay-boat, and the chowder and fishing excursions;—or, of later years, little voyages down and out New York bay, in the pilot boats. Those same later years, also, while living in Brooklyn, (1836-'50,) I went regularly every week in the mild seasons down to Coney Island, at that time a long, bare, unfrequented shore, which I had all to myself, and where I loved, after bathing, to race up and down the hard sand, and declaim Homer or Shakespeare to the surf and sea-gulls by the hour."

It is more significant in Whitman's case than in Hawthorne's or Bryant's that he for a long time belonged to what he called "the good old Democratic Party—the party of the sainted Jefferson and Jackson," for Whitman's attitude toward both life and literature was colored by that affiliation. In a sense *Leaves of Grass* seems the logical literary sequel to the Jacksonian movement in politics.

In 1848 came Whitman's long and important journey to New Orleans, where he worked for a short time on a newspaper and may have had a love affair that left an abiding impression. At any rate, on his way to and from New Orleans he saw much of the America which he was later to try to express in literature. For a map showing Whitman's travels, see Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades*, p. 188.

Whitman was slow in maturing intellectually. His earlier verse and prose alike are wanting in distinction. Not until 1855, when he was thirty-six years old, did he bring out the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. By that time Lowell had written *The Biglow Papers, First Series, A Fable for Critics*, and other important poems, and Melville, with his best books published, had practically given up literature. Back of *Leaves of Grass* lies a long period of incubation and slow growth. Some time before 1855 Whitman had experienced something very like a religious conversion—a new birth. He emerged almost a different man—a poet and prophet with a message for his countrymen. Notebooks published in the past two decades throw light upon this gradual development. At first Whitman thought of taking to the platform and lecturing, as Emerson was doing. In his poems one notes a certain oratorical strain along with many other influences: the Bible, Ossian, Carlyle, Emerson, etc. Whitman once remarked to J. T. Trowbridge: "I was simmering, simmering, simmering: Emerson brought me to a boil." Although Whitman's poems do not contain many verbal echoes of Emerson, there are many passages which recall the substance of "Self-Reliance," "The Over-Soul," and "The Poet." Like Emerson, Whitman was something of a mystic. He shared, too, Emerson's conception of the proper function of American literature. The idea that our literature should deal with native themes and should express the American spirit was of course not a novel one in 1855—it had been advocated *ad nauseam* for more than half a century—but Whitman undertook the task with a literalness and a seriousness not found in any of his predecessors. In the chapter on Whitman in his *American Criticism* (1928), Norman Foerster has an excellent summary of Whitman's literary creed:

"There are many kinds of literature, because each age interprets life in its own special way; and each kind has its validity. Yet there is a best kind, not as yet realized. Broadly speaking, all the past kinds are expressions of feudalism and superstition. By virtue of the law of progress, the new age now dawning, the age of democracy and science, will be the best, and its literature will be the best. Therefore it is impossible to formulate the characteristics of the best literature on the basis of any literature already produced. Looking to the future rather than the past, the critic must be a revolutionary and a prophet. In formulating a new theory, such a critic will be guided by the characteristics of the age, as they are coming to clearness in America. These characteristics are, in the first place, Democracy, which is faith in the common man, belief in the greatness of spiritual individuality; and, in the second place, Science, which is faith in nature, belief in the glory of the physical. From these two is now being born a new religion, greater than either the Greek or the Hebrew. The function of the literature of the future will be to bring on the new age and eventually to give it full expression. And its law of expression must be natural—organic. The mode of expression suited to the régime of feudalism is becoming anachronistic, and we must now envisage a new mode suited to the régime of Democracy and Science."*

In abandoning the regular meters for free verse, possibly Whitman remembered Emerson's sentence in his essay, "The Poet": "For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem,—a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own and adorns nature with a new thing." In his 1876 preface Whitman wrote: "Poetic style, when address'd to the Soul, is less definite form, outline, sculpture, and becomes vista, music, half-tints, and even less than half-tints." Perhaps Whitman's best statement of the case for his individual verse form is found in an anonymous article in defense of his own poetry, published in the *Saturday Press* for May 19, 1860:

"Some reflections may properly be submitted here, relative to the form in which Walt Whitman's poems are embodied and expressed. It is a form so rough and rugged—so careless, variable and peculiar—that perhaps it is very natural the poetry should sometimes degenerate into prose. Something is to be said, however in defence of this system of versification. It is at least original. The theory would seem to be, as Walt has variously indicated, that always the thought or passion of the poet should determine itself in natural, congenial expression. It is assumed in this theory, and indeed it is very true, that much of the verse ordinarily written, is written without a sincere motive, and has therefore neither power nor value. It is further assumed that the styles of versification generally accredited and employed are inadequate to the utterance of earnest thought and feeling. Consequently, Walt Whitman, who presents himself as the Poet of the American Republic in the Present Age, who is actuated by a sincere motive, and has earnest thought and feeling to express, refuses to confine and cripple himself within the laws of what to him is inefficient art. Reverencing the spirit of poetry above the form, he submits that the one shall determine the other. That his volume is poetic in spirit cannot rationally be denied; and, whatever the eccentricities of its form, no critical reader can fail to perceive that the expression seems always the suitable and natural

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result of the thought. It is indeed tame and prosy in the conveyance of any commonplace idea or feeling, but it rises and melts into sweet and thrilling music whenever impelled by the beautiful impulse of a grand thought or emotion."

Whitman's contemporaries—like some modern readers—often failed to understand his use of the pronoun "I." As he suggests in "One's-Self I Sing," it refers not only to the poet but also to the reader, who imaginatively identifies himself with the poet. It refers sometimes to the actual Walt Whitman and at other times to an ideal Walt Whitman. Did Whitman, when he attempted to put himself into a book, remember Emerson's sentence in "The Poet": "Dante's praise is, that he dared to write his autobiography in colossal cipher, or into universality"? In "A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads" Whitman said:

" . . . I found myself remaining possess'd, at the age of thirty-one to thirty-three, with a special desire and conviction. . . . This was a feeling or ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic Personality in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America—and to exploit that Personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book."

He adds significantly: "No one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance, or as aiming mainly toward art or æstheticism."

The 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* was a remarkable book to appear in the year which also saw the publication of Irving's *Wolfert's Roost*, Melville's *Israel Potter*, Simms's *The Forayers*, Bayard Taylor's *Poems of Home and Travel*, and Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. Whitman himself set the type in the printing shop of Andrew and James Rome. It was a thin volume with very large pages so that only occasionally was it necessary to break the long lines of verse. On the cover little grass roots ran down from the gold letters of the title. But when the book was offered for sale, there were almost no buyers. Whitman had sent copies of the book to various writers. Whittier, it is said, threw his into the fire. Charles Eliot Norton reviewed the volume not unfavorably, but his friend Lowell to the last could see little or nothing in Whitman's poetry. The unfavorable reception bore very hard upon the poet, who had closed his rhapsodic preface with the bold claim: "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it." He had to fight to get a hearing. He wrote anonymous articles in defense of his poems. To the end of his life he was never quite reconciled to being the poet of a cult and to being admired chiefly by a small circle of disciples. It must have seemed to him the irony of fate that what he called the "divine average" could make nothing of his poetry, while those who were most likely to admire him were sophisticated intellectuals or consumptive young Britons like Robert Louis Stevenson and John Addington Symonds. There is some truth in Sidney Lanier's comment that Whitman's poetry, "instead of being the natural outcome of a fresh young democracy, is a product which would be impossible except in a highly civilized society." There were a few who quickly recognized Whitman's importance. One of them was Emerson, who wrote to the new poet the following remarkable letter:

"CONCORD, MASS., July 21st., 1855.

"DEAR SIR,—I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of 'Leaves of Grass.' I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I am very happy in reading it, as great power makes us happy. It

meets the demand I am always making of what seems the sterile and stingy Nature, as if too much handiwork or too much lymph in the temperament were making our Western wits fat and mean. I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things, said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire.

"I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start. I rubbed my eyes a little to see if this sunbeam were no illusion; but the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty. It has the best merits, namely, of fortifying and encouraging.

"I did not know, until I last night saw the book advertised in a newspaper, that I could trust the name as real and available for a post-office.

"I wish to see my benefactor, and have felt much like striking my tasks, and visiting New York to pay you my respects.

R. W. EMERSON."

This was some compensation for such notices as that which appeared in *Putnam's Monthly*, calling the book a "compound of New England Transcendentalism and New York rowdy." Whitman was persuaded to allow Emerson's letter to be printed in the *New York Tribune*—without asking Emerson's permission. The following year, when Whitman brought out a second and enlarged edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the backstrip carried, over Emerson's name, the sentence: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career." At Emerson's suggestion, Thoreau and Moncure D. Conway went to see Whitman. Conway's reaction, as described in his *Autobiography* (1904), is given on pp. 29-31. Thoreau wrote to his friend, Harrison Blake:

"December 7 [1856].

"That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote to you, is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his second edition (which he gave me), and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. Perhaps I remember best the poem of Walt Whitman, an American ['Song of Myself'], and the Sun-Down Poem. There are two or three pieces in the book which are disagreeable, to say the least; simply sensual. He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the beasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason. No doubt there have always been dens where such deeds were unblushingly recited, and it is no merit to compete with their inhabitants. But even on this side he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know. I have found his poem exhilarating, encouraging. As for its sensuality,—and it may turn out to be less sensual than it appears,—I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read them without harm, that is, without understanding them. One woman told me that no woman could read it,—as if a man could read what a woman could not. Of course Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?

"On the whole, it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons, so called, that have been preached in this land put together are equal to it for preaching.

"We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human. You can't confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn or New York. How they must shudder when they read him! He is awfully good.

"To be sure I sometimes feel a little imposed on. By this his heartiness and broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind prepared to see wonders,—as it were, sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain,—stirs me well up, and then—throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude, and sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem,—an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. Wonderfully like the Orientals, too, considering that when I asked him if he had read them, he answered, 'No: tell me about them.'

"I did not get far in conversation with him,—two more being present,—and among the few things I chanced to say, I remember that one was, in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics, and so on, which may have been somewhat of a damper to him.

"Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident.

"He is a great fellow."*

In 1860 Whitman went to Boston, where the firm of Thayer and Eldridge published the third edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which had a fair sale until the Civil War began. Before the third edition appeared, occurred the conversation on Boston Common with Emerson which Whitman thus described twenty-one years later:

"Up and down this breadth by Beacon Street, between these same old elms, I walked for two hours, of a bright sharp February mid-day twenty-one years ago, with Emerson, then in his prime, keen, physically and morally magnetic, arm'd at every point, and when he chose, wielding the emotional just as well as the intellectual. During those two hours he was the talker and I the listener. It was an argument-statement, reconnoitring, review, attack, and pressing home (like an infantry corps in order, artillery, cavalry, infantry,) of all that could be said against that part (and a main part) in the construction of my poems, 'Children of Adam.' More precious than gold to me that dissertation—it afforded me, ever after, this strange and paradoxical lesson; each point of E's statement was unanswerable, no judge's charge ever more complete or convincing, I could never hear the points better put—and then I felt down in my soul the clear and unmistakable conviction to disobey all, and pursue my own way. 'What have you to say then to such things?' said E., pausing in conclusion. 'Only that while I can't answer them all, I feel more settled than ever to adhere to my own theory, and exemplify it,' was my candid response. Whereupon we went and had a good dinner at the American House. And thenceforward I never wavered or was touch'd with qualms, (as I confess I had been two or three times before)."

The Civil War influenced Whitman more profoundly than any of his poetic contemporaries except perhaps Henry Timrod; and his *Drum-Taps* (1865) is the best single volume of poems occasioned by the War. Secession and war brought to the poet of democracy the sickening doubt whether his message was a true one. The outcome of the war seemed, however, to justify his faith in his country. The war and the figure of the martyred President occupy something like a central position in his work. Living in Washington during the last three years of the

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struggle, Whitman saw more of the war than most civilians. His real service lay in looking after the wounded, Union and Confederate alike, in the Washington hospitals. In Washington, too, he formed close friendships with his two ablest and most faithful champions: William Douglas O'Connor and John Burroughs. When in 1865 Whitman was dismissed from a minor post which he held in the Department of the Interior, O'Connor came to his defense in a spirited pamphlet, *The Good Gray Poet*. Whitman was soon given a place in the office of the Attorney-General.

The fourth and fifth editions (with new poems) of *Leaves of Grass* appeared in 1867 and 1871. In the latter year Whitman published his most important prose work, *Democratic Vistas*, which shows that the poet was by no means the uncritical defender of American democracy that he is generally considered. In 1872 he read at the Dartmouth College commencement his poem, "As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free." "The invitation," says Emory Holloway, "seems to have originated with certain students who thought, by inviting a radical poet, to have fun at the expense of the more conservatively orthodox Congregationalists of the faculty." But if few Americans took Whitman's poetic claims seriously, he had already found admirers among the critics and scholars of Europe. Among these were Rudolf Schmidt in Denmark, the poet Freiligrath in Germany, Madame Blanc in France, Edward Dowden in Ireland, and in England Swinburne, Tennyson, Robert Buchanan, John Addington Symonds, Mrs. Anne Gilchrist, and William Michael Rossetti, who in 1868 published a selection from Whitman's poems for English readers.

In 1873 Whitman was partly paralyzed. Although his health improved, he was never a well man during the remainder of his life. In his later years he lived in Camden, New Jersey, just across the river from Philadelphia. He bore his trials—ill health, comparative poverty, lack of wide appreciation—with a patience and a cheerfulness that indicate an optimism based upon something deeper than his earlier abounding physical vitality. During his later years he was the object of attention and adulation from an increasing circle of friends. In Horace Traubel's three volumes, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, one gets many glimpses of the good gray poet and finds many interesting bits of his talk. In 1876 came the Author's Edition of his works. In 1879 he made a journey to the West as far as the Rockies—he had always been interested in the West. Another edition of the *Leaves* came in 1881, and the final one in 1891-1892. In 1892, the year of his death, appeared his *Complete Prose*. He was buried in Camden in Harleigh Cemetery in a tomb that seemed too expensive to some who had contributed to help one whom they supposed to be poverty-stricken.

Before his death Whitman was becoming recognized by more and more Americans as an important poet. As one reads the story in Clara Barrus's illuminating volume, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades*, one notes the gradual breakdown of "Victorian" conventions which had stood in the way of wide appreciation. In November, 1880, Edmund Clarence Stedman published in *Scribner's Monthly* an important critical article which was included in his volume, *Poets of America* (1885). Stedman's judicial praise did not satisfy Whitman's admirers. John Burroughs wrote:

"Of Whitman's prophetic character, of his modernity, of his relation to science, to democracy, of his political, national, racial, and religious significance, we hear very little. It is a sort of literary class-room drill the critic puts him through, and the wonder is that he finds so much to approve, and so little to condemn."

Slowly but steadily Whitman's reputation has grown since his death. His influence upon the poets of the twentieth century is much larger than upon those of the nineteenth. He now occupies a conspicuous place in literary histories and anthologies, and he is generally recognized as one of the two or three most important American writers. Scholars, who long neglected him, have in the past decade done much to make his work better understood. But it cannot be said even today that his place is definitely fixed. Perhaps, as in the case of Poe, Whitman is a poet who will always seem important to those who accept his view of life and literature, and unimportant to most of those who cannot agree with him. And yet, at his best, Whitman's poems are, let us hope, such as to command the respect of those who do not find his view of life congenial. When judged by high artistic standards, much of his work is undoubtedly inferior; but such poems as "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," and "The Mystic Trumpeter" are great poems when judged by any standards.

Among the better biographies of Whitman are those of Bliss Perry (1906); Emory Holloway (1926); and Henry S. Canby (1943). Canby is also the author of the chapter on Whitman in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). See also Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (3 vols., 1906-1914); *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman* (1918); and Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (1931). For Whitman's early work, see Emory Holloway (ed.), *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman* (1921); Holloway and Ralph Adimari (eds.), *New York Dissected* (1936); and Clifton J. Furness (ed.), *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (1928). The standard edition is *The Complete Writings of Walt Whitman* (10 vols., 1902.) An excellent edition for the student is Holloway's Inclusive Edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1925). The so-called *Complete Prose Works* appeared in 1892. Excellent volumes of selections are Floyd Stovall's volume (1934) in the American Writers Series and Mark Van Doren's *The Portable Walt Whitman* (1945). For criticism, see F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (1941); Norman Foerster, *American Criticism* (1928); George Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900); Stuart P. Sherman, *Americans* (1922); and Amy Lowell, *Poetry and Poets* (1930). Gay W. Allen's *Whitman Handbook* (1946) is a useful guide. See also the following articles: Mody C. Boatright, "Whitman and Hegel," *University of Texas Studies in English*, IX, 134-150 (July, 1929); Clarence Gohdes, "Whitman and Emerson," *Sewanee Review*, XXXVII, 79-93 (January, 1929); John B. Moore, "The Master of Whitman" [Emerson], *Studies in Philology*, XXIII, 77-89 (January, 1926); Emory Holloway, "Whitman as Critic of America," *ibid.*, XX, 345-369 (July, 1923); Edward Hungerford, "Walt Whitman and His Chart of Bumps," *American Literature*, II, 350-384 (January, 1931); Floyd Stovall, "Main Drifts in Whitman's Poetry," *ibid.*, IV, 3-21 (March, 1932); Autrey Nell Wiley, "Reiterative Devices in *Leaves of Grass*," *ibid.*, I, 161-170 (May, 1929); and Henry Alonzo Myers, "Whitman's Conception of the Spiritual Democracy, 1855-1856," *ibid.*, VI, 239-253 (November, 1934). Among more recent materials are Clarence Gohdes and Rollo G. Silver (eds.), *Faint Clews and Indirections: Manuscripts of Walt Whitman and His Family* (1949) and Josiah C. Trent, "Walt Whitman—A Case History," *Surgery, Gynecology, and Obstetrics*, LXXXVII, 113-121 (July, 1948). For other references, see Lewis Leary, *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

[Whitman in 1860]
from LITERARY FRIENDS AND
ACQUAINTANCE* (1900)

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837-1920)

- - - He was often at Pfaff's with them,¹ and the night of my visit [in 1860] he was the chief fact of my experience. I did not know he was there till I was on my way out, for he did not sit at the table under the pavement, but at the head of one farther into the room. There, as I passed, some friendly fellow stopped me and named me to him, and I remember how he leaned back in his chair, and reached out his great hand to me, as if he were going to give it me for good and all. He had a fine head, with a cloud of Jovian hair upon it, and a branching beard and mustache, and gentle eyes that looked most kindly into mine, and seemed to wish the liking which I instantly gave him, though we hardly passed a word, and our acquaintance was summed up in that glance and the grasp of his mighty fist upon my hand. I doubt if he had any notion who or

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¹ A group interested in the *Saturday Press*, which was in 1865 to print Mark Twain's "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

what I was beyond the fact that I was a young poet of some sort, but he may possibly have remembered seeing my name printed after some very Heinesque verses in the *Press*. I did not meet him again for twenty years, and then I had only a moment with him when he was reading the proofs of his poems in Boston. Some years later I saw him for the last time, one day after his lecture on Lincoln, in that city, when he came down from the platform to speak with some handshaking friends who gathered about him. Then and always he gave me the sense of a sweet and true soul, and I felt in him a spiritual dignity which I will not try to reconcile with his printing in the forefront of his book a passage from a private letter of Emerson's, though I believe he would not have seen such a thing as most other men would, or thought ill of it in another. The spiritual purity which I felt in him no less than the dignity is something that I will no more try to reconcile with what denies it in his page; but such things we may well leave to the adjustment of finer balances than we have at hand. I will make sure only of the greatest benignity in the presence of the man. The apostle of the rough, the uncouth, was the gentlest person; his barbaric yawp, translated into the terms of social encounter, was an address of singular quiet, delivered in a voice of winning and endearing friendliness. - - -

ONE'S-SELF I SING*

(1867, 1871)

This poem is now placed first in most editions of Whitman's poems.

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

* The selections from Whitman's poems are, with the exception of "Song of Myself," taken from Emory Holloway's Inclusive Edition of *Leaves of Grass* by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Doran and Company.

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

from SONG OF MYSELF

(1855)

The text of this poem, later entitled "Song of Myself," is taken from the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In the 1855 edition the poem had no title. In the 1856 edition it was entitled "A Poem of Walt Whitman, an American." The earlier text is given so that the reader may have a better conception of the book which aroused such widely different reactions as those of Emerson and Whittier. Whitman's revisions did not change the essential nature of the poem.

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul, 5
I lean and loafe at my ease . . . observing a spear of summer grass.

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes . . . the shelves are crowded with perfumes,
I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it,
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it. 10

The atmosphere is not a perfume . . . It has no taste of the distillation . . . it is odorless,
It is for my mouth forever . . . I am in love with it,
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,
I am mad for it to be in contact with me. 15

The smoke of my own breath,
Echos, ripples, and buzzed whispers . . . loveroot, silkthread, crotch and vine,
My respiration and inspiration . . . the beating of my heart . . . the passing of blood and air through
my lungs, 20
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and darkcolored sea-rocks, and of hay in the
barn,

The sound of the belched words of my voice . . . words loosed to the eddies of the wind,
A few light kisses . . . a few embraces . . . a reaching around of arms,
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag, 25
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hillsides,
The feeling of health . . . the full-noon trill . . . the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun.

Have you reckoned a thousand acres much? Have you reckoned the earth much?
Have you practiced so long to learn to read? 30
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun . . . there are millions of suns left,
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand . . . nor look through the eyes of the dead . . .
nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from yourself.

I have heard what the talkers were talking . . . the talk of the beginning and the end, 40
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
 Nor any more youth or age than there is now;
 And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
 Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

5

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean,
 Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest.

Loafe with me on the grass . . . loose the stop from your throat,
 Not words, not music or rhyme I want . . . not custom or lecture, not even the best,
 Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.

10

I mind how we lay in June, such a transparent summer morning;
 You settled your head athwart my hips and gently turned over upon me,
 And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my barestript heart,
 And reached till you felt my beard, and reached till you held my feet.

15

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and joy and knowledge that pass all the art and argu-
 ment of the earth;
 And I know that the hand of God is the elderhand of my own,
 And I know that the spirit of God is the eldest brother of my own,
 And that all the men ever born are also my brothers . . . and the women my sisters and lovers,
 And that a kelson of the creation is love;
 And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
 And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
 And mossy scabs of the wormfence, and heaped stones, and elder and mullen and pokeweed.

20

25

A child said, What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;
 How could I answer the child? . . . I do not know what it is any more than he.

30

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
 A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
 Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say Whose?

Or I guess the grass is itself a child . . . the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
 And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
 Growing among black folks as among white,
 Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

40

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

45

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,
 It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
 It may be if I had known them I would have loved them;
 It may be you are from old people and from women, and from offspring taken soon out of their
 mothers' laps,
 And here you are the mothers' laps.

50

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues! 5
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps. 10

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death, 15
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceased the moment life appeared.

All goes onward and outward . . . and nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier[.] 20

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new-washed babe . . . and am not contained between
my hat and boots,
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike, and every one good,
The earth good, and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth or an adjunct of an earth, 30
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself;
They do not know how immortal, but I know.

The Yankee clipper is under her three skysails . . . she cuts the sparkle and scud,
My eyes settle the land . . . I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck. 35

The boatmen and clamdiggers arose early and stopped for me,
I tucked my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time,
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle. 40

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far-west . . . the bride was a red girl,
Her father and his friends sat near by crosslegged and dumbly smoking . . . they had moccasins to
their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders;
On a bank lounged the trapper . . . he was dressed mostly in skins . . . his luxuriant beard and curls
protected his neck, 45
One hand rested on his rifle . . . the other hand held firmly the wrist of the red girl,
She had long eyelashes . . . her head was bare . . . her coarse straight locks descended upon her volup-
tuous limbs and reached to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopped outside, 50
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsey and weak,

And went where he sat on a log, and led him in and assured him,
 And brought water and filled a tub for his sweated body and bruised feet,
 And gave him a room that entered from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
 And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,
 And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles; 5
 He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and passed north,
 I had him sit next me at table . . . my firelock leaned in the corner.

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night,
 Ya-honk! he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation; 10
 The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listen closer,
 I find its purpose and place up there toward the November sky,

The sharpfooted moose of the north, the cat on the housesill, the chickadee, the prairie-dog,
 The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats, 15
 The brood of the turkeyhen, and she with her halfspread wings,
 I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,
 They scorn the best I can do to relate them. 20

I am enamoured of growing outdoors,
 Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods,
 Of the builders and steerers of ships, of the wielders of axes and mauls, of the drivers of horses,
 I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out. 25

What is commonest and cheapest and nearest and easiest is Me,
 Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
 Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
 Not asking the sky to come down to my goodwill, 30
 Scattering it freely forever.

These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original with me,
 If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing or next to nothing,
 If they do not enclose everything they are next to nothing, 35
 If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are nothing,
 If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

I play not a march for victors only . . . I play great marches for conquered and slain persons. 40

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
 I also say it is good to fall . . . battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I sound triumphal drums for the dead . . . I fling through my embouchures the loudest and gayest
 music to them, 45
 Vivas to those who have failed, and to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea, and those themselves
 who sank in the sea,
 And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes, and the numberless unknown
 heroes equal to the greatest heroes known.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less,
 And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them, 50

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

And I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

And I know I am deathless, 5
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself to be understood, 10
I see that the elementary laws never apologize,
I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by after all.

I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content, 15
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware, and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait. 20

My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time. 25

I am the poet of the body,
And I am the poet of the soul.
The pleasures of heaven are with me, and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself . . . the latter I translate into a new tongue. 30

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men. 30

I chant a new chant of dilation or pride, 35
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? Are you the President?
It is a trifle . . . they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on. 40

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night;
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close barebosomed night! Press close magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds! Night of the large few stars! 45
Still nodding night! Mad naked summer night!

Smile O voluptuous coolbreathed earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset! Earth of the mountains misty-topt! 50
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!

1819-1892-----WALT WHITMAN

Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbowed earth! Rich apple-blossomed earth!
Smile, for your lover comes!

I am the poet of commonsense and of the demonstrable and of immortality; 5
And am not the poet of goodness only . . . I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

Hurrah for positive science! Lone [*sic*] live exact demonstration!
Fetch stonecrop and mix it with cedar and branches of lilac;
This is the lexicographer or chemist . . . this made a grammar of the old cartouches. 10
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas,
This is the geologist, and this works with the scalpel, and this is a mathematician.

Gentleman [*sic*] I receive you, and attach and clasp hands with you,
The facts are useful and real . . . they are not my dwelling . . . I enter by them to an area of my
dwelling.

Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos,
Disorderly fleshy and sensual . . . eating drinking and breeding,
No sentimentalist . . . no stander above men and women or apart from them . . . no more modest
than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs! 25

Whatever degrades another degrades me . . . and whatever is done or said returns at last to me,
And whatever I do or say I also return.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging . . . through me the current and index. 30

I speak the password primeval . . . I give the sign of democracy;
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of slaves, 35
Voices of prostitutes and of deformed persons,
Voices of the diseased and despairing, and of thieves and dwarfs,
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
And of the threads that connect the stars—and of wombs, and of the fatherstuff,
And of the rights of them the others are down upon, 40
Of the trivial and flat and foolish and despised,
Of fog in the air and beetles rolling balls of dung.

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul. 45

Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so,
Only what nobody denies is so.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars, 50
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre [*sic*] for the highest,

And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
 And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
 And the cow crunching with depressed head surpasses any statue,
 And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels,
 And I could come every afternoon of my life to look at the farmer's girl boiling her iron tea-kettle
 and baking shortcake.

I think I could turn and live awhile with the animals . . . they are so placid and self-contained,
 I stand and look them sometimes half the day long. 10

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
 They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
 They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
 Not one is dissatisfied . . . not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
 Not one kneels to another nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago, 15
 Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole earth.

Did you read in the seabooks of the oldfashioned frigate-fight?
 Did you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars? 20

Our foe was no skulk in his ship, I tell you,
 His was the English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be;
 Along the lowered eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him . . . the yards entangled . . . the cannon touched, 25
 My captain lashed fast with his own hands.

We had received some eighteen-pound shots under the water,
 On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing up
 overhead. 30

Ten o'clock at night, and the full moon shining and the leaks on the gain, and five feet of water
 reported,
 The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to give them a chance for them-
 selves. 35

The transit to and from the magazine was now stopped by the sentinels,
 They saw so many strange faces they did not know whom to trust.

Our frigate was afire . . . the other asked if we demanded quarters? if our colors were struck and the
 fighting done?

I laughed content when I heard the voice of the little captain,
 We have not struck, he composedly cried, We have just begun our part of the fighting.

Only three guns were in use, 45
 One was directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast,
 Two well-served with grape and canister silenced his musketry and cleared his decks,
 The tops alone seconded the fire of this little battery, especially the maintop,
 They all held out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease, 50
 The leaks gained fast on the pumps . . . the fire eat toward the powder-magazine,
 One of the pumps was shot away . . . it was generally thought we were sinking.

Serene stood the little captain,
He was not hurried . . . his voice was neither high nor low,
His eye gave more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve at night, there in the beams of the moon they surrendered to us. 5

It is time to explain myself . . . let us stand up.

What is known I strip away . . . I launch all men and women forward with me into the unknown. 10

The clock indicates the moment . . . but what does eternity indicate?

Eternity lies in bottomless reservoirs . . . its buckets are rising forever and ever,
They pour and they pour and they exhale away. 15

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers;
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety. 20

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you my brother or my sister? 25
I am sorry for you . . . they are not murderous or jealous upon me;
All has been gentle with me . . . I keep no account with lamentation;
What have I to do with lamentation?

I am an acme of things accomplished, and I an encloser of things to be. 30

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,
All below duly traveled—and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me, 35
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, the vapor from the nostrils of death,
I know I was even there . . . I waited unseen and always,
And slept while God carried me through the lethargic mist,
And took my time . . . and took no hurt from the fœtid carbon. 40

Long I was hugged close . . . long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have helped me. 45

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen;
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me, 50
My embryo has never been torpid . . . nothing could overlay it;

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

For it the nebula cohered to an orb . . . the long slow strata piled to rest it on . . . vast vegetables
gave it sustenance.

Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me, 5
Now I stand on this spot with my soul.

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's-self is, 10
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral, dressed in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheeled universe, 15
And any man or woman shall stand cool and supercilious before a million universes.

And I call to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death. 20

I hear and behold God in every object, yet I understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day? 25
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass;
I find letters from God dropped in the street, and every one is signed by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that others will punctually come forever and ever. 30

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then . . . I contradict myself;
I am large . . . I contain multitudes.

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me . . . he complains of my gab and my loitering. 35

I too am not a bit tamed . . . I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me, 40
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadowed wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air . . . I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies and drift it in lacy jags. 45

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean, 50
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre of your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
 Missing me one place search another,
 I stop some where waiting for you[.]

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

(1859, 1860, 1881)

This poem was first published in the *Saturday Press* for December 24, 1859, under the title, "A Child's Reminiscence." In the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* it was entitled, "A Word out of the Sea." Professor Floyd Stovall regards the poem as a lament for the loss of a loved companion or mistress. "The mockingbird," he says, "is the symbol of the genius or dæmon (spelled *demon* by Whitman) of the poet's soul." In this poem, as in many of his best poems, Whitman is writing of the seashore, night, and the thought of death.

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
 Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
 Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
 Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd alone, bare-
 headed, barefoot, 5
 Down from the shower'd halo,
 Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
 Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
 From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
 From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard, 10
 From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
 From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
 From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
 From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
 From the word stronger and more delicious than any, 15
 From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
 As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
 Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
 A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
 Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves, 20
 I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
 Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
 A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,¹ 25
 When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
 Up this seashore in some briers,
 Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
 And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
 And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand, 30
 And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

¹ Long Island.

Shine! shine! shine!

Pour down your warmth, great sun!

While we bask, we two together.

Two together!

5

Winds blow south, or winds blow north,

Day come white, or night come black,

Home, or rivers and mountains from home,

Singing all time, minding no time,

While we two keep together.

10

Till of a sudden,

May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,

One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,

Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,

Nor ever appear'd again.

15

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,

And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,

Over the hoarse surging of the sea,

Or flitting from brier to brier by day,

I saw, or heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,

The solitary guest from Alabama.

20

Blow! blow! blow!

25

Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;

I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,

All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,

Down almost amid the slapping waves,

Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

30

He call'd on his mate,

He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

35

Yes my brother I know,

The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,

For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,

Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,

Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,

The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,

I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,

Listen'd long and long.

40

45

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,

Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!

Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,

And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,

But my love soothes not me, not me.

50

*Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.*

*O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.* 5

*O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?*

*Loud! loud! loud! 10
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon! 15
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land! land! O land! 20
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars! 25
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.*

*O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.* 30

*Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon! 35
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft! sink low!
Soft! let me just murmur, 40
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.*

*Hither my love! 45
Here I am! here!
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere, 50
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,*

*That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

5

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

10

*O past, O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.*

15

*The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.*

20

25

30

*Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.*

35

*O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.*

40

45

*O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!*

50

*A word then, (for I will conquer it,
The word final, superior to all,*

Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
 Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea waves?
 Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea, 5
 Delaying not, hurrying not,
 Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
 Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
 And again death, death, death, death,
 Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart, 10
 But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
 Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
 Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget. 15
 But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
 That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
 With the thousand responsive songs at random,
 My own songs awaked from that hour,
 And with them the key, the word up from the waves, 20
 The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
 That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
 (Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,)
 The sea whisper'd me. 25

POETS TO COME

(1860, 1867)

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come! 30
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than before known,
 Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future, 35
 I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you and then
 averts his face,
 Leaving it to you to prove and define it, 40
 Expecting the main things from you.

FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES

(1860, 1867)

Facing west from California's shores, 45
 Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
 I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,
 Look off the shores of my Western sea, the circle almost circled;
 For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere, 50
 From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero,
 From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,

Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,
 Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
 (But where is what I started for so long ago?
 And why is it yet unfound?)

5

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

(1865)

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow! 10
 Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,
 Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
 Into the school where the scholar is studying;
 Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride,
 Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his grain, 15
 So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
 Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
 Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds, 20
 No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they continue?
 Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
 Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
 Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

25

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
 Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
 Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,¹
 Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
 Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties, 30
 Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
 So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

(1865, 1871)

35

A line in long array where they wind betwixt green islands,
 They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun—hark to the musical clank,
 Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop to drink,
 Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture, the negligent rest on the saddles, 40
 Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the ford—while,
 Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
 The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

45

BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE²

(1865, 1871)

I see before me now a traveling army halting,
 Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the orchards of summer, 50

¹ One who prays.

² Compare the conclusion of Book VIII in Homer's *Iliad*.

Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in places rising high,
 Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes dingily seen,
 The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up on the mountain,
 The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized, flickering,
 And over all the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded, breaking out, the eternal stars. 5

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK GRAY AND DIM

(1865, 1871)

A sight in camp in the daybreak gray and dim, 10
 As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
 As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent,
 Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying,
 Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woolen blanket, 15
 Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

Curious I halt and silent stand,
 Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first just lift the blanket;
 Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-gray'd hair and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
 Who are you my dear comrade?

Then to the second I step—and who are you my child and darling?
 Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming? 25

Then to the third—a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory;
 Young man I think I know you—I think this face is the face of the Christ himself,
 Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

30

AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS

(1865, 1867)

As toilsome I wander'd Virginia's woods,
 To the music of rustling leaves kick'd by my feet, (for 'twas autumn,) 35
 I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;
 Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat, (easily all could I understand,)
 The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose—yet this sign left,
 On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade. 40

Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering,
 Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene of life,
 Yet at times through changeful season and scene, abrupt, alone, or in the crowded street,
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave, comes the inscription rude in Virginia's woods, 45
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

AS I LAY WITH MY HEAD IN YOUR LAP CAMERADO

(1865, 1881)

50

As I lay with my head in your lap camerado,
 The confession I made I resume, what I said to you and the open air I resume,

I know I am restless and make others so,
 I know my words are weapons full of danger, full of death,
 For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws, to unsettle them,
 I am more resolute because all have denied me than I could ever have been had all accepted me,
 I heed not and have never heeded either experience, cautions, majorities, nor ridicule, 5
 And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing to me,
 And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing to me;
 Dear camerado! I confess I have urged you onward with me, and still urge you, without the least idea
 what is our destination,
 Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and defeated. 10

OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHEPIC A VOICE

(1860, 1865, 1867)

Over the carnage rose prophetic a voice, 15
 Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet,
 Those who love each other shall become invincible,
 They shall yet make Columbia victorious.

Sons of the Mother of All, you shall yet be victorious, 20
 You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of the earth.

No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers,
 If need be a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves for one. 25

One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade,
 From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an Oregonese, shall be friends triune,
 More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth.

To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come, 30
 Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond death.

It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see manly affection,
 The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly,
 The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers, 35
 The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of iron,
 I, ecstatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers tie you. 40

(Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?
 Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?
 Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

(1865)

This poem and the one which immediately follows it should be considered in connection
 with other poems about Lincoln.

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
 But O heart! heart! heart!
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead. 5

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding, 10
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 Here Captain! dear father!
 The arm beneath your head!
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead. 15

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
 From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won; 20
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead. 25

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

(1865)

In *Under the Microscope* A. C. Swinburne referred to this poem as "the most sonorous an-
 them ever chanted in the church of the world."

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
 And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night, 35
 I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
 Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
 And thought of him I love. 40

2

O powerful western fallen star!
 O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
 O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star! 45
 O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
 O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings, 50
 Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
 With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

5

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

10

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

15

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray
debris, 20
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin. 25

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black, 30
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn, 35
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac. 40

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane and sacred death. 45

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes. 50
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night, 5
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other stars all look'd on,)
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night, 10
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp, 15
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love? 25

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western Sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love. 30

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love? 35

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there, 40
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing
Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn. 50

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
 The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
 The gentle soft-born measureless light,
 The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
 The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars, 5
 Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
 Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes 10
 Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe. 15

O liquid and free and tender!
 O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
 You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
 Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me. 20

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
 In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
 In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
 In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,) 25
 Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
 The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
 And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
 And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
 And the streets how their throbblings throb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there. 30
 Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
 Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
 And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me, 35
 And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
 And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
 I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
 Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
 To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still. 40

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
 The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
 And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love. 45

From deep secluded recesses,
 From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
 Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me, 50
 As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
 And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving.
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

5

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*

10

*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.*

15

*Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.*

20

*From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.*

25

*The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

30

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.*

35

15

*To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.*

40

*Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.*

*While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.*

45

*And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.*

50

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
 And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
 I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
 But I saw they were not as was thought,
 They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not, 5
 The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
 And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
 And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16

10

Passing the visions, passing the night,
 Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
 Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
 Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
 As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night, 15
 Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
 Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
 As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
 Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
 I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring. 20

I cease from my song for thee,
 From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
 O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

25

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
 The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
 And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
 With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
 With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird, 30
 Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
 For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands--and this for his dear sake,
 Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
 There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

35

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

(1865, 1881)

Compare Frederick J. Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in *The Frontier in American History* (1920), and Jay B. Hubbell, "The Frontier," in Norman Foerster (ed.), *The Reinterpretation of American Literature*.

Come my tan-faced children,
 Follow well in order, get your weapons ready, 45
 Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
 We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger, 50
 We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 5

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 10

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 15

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 20

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 25

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 30

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the Northern,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 35

O resistless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 40

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress, (bend your heads all,)
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 45

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 50

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd,

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Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come? 5
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat, 10
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work, 15
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked, 20
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way, 25
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets, 30
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait behind, 35
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives! 40
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,) 45
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious, 50
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

5

Has the night descended?
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding on our way?
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

10

Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

15

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

(1865, 1867)

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

20

25

WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH

(1868, 1871)

Whispers of heavenly death murmur'd I hear,
Labial gossip of night, sibilant chorals,
Footsteps gently ascending, mystical breezes wafted soft and low,
Ripples of unseen rivers, tides of a current flowing, forever flowing,
(Or is it the plashing of tears? the measureless waters of human tears?)

30

35

I see, just see skyward, great cloud-masses,
Mournfully slowly they roll, silently swelling and mixing,
With at times a half-dimm'd sadden'd far-off star,
Appearing and disappearing.

40

(Some parturition rather, some solemn immortal birth;
On the frontiers to eyes impenetrable,
Some soul is passing over.)

45

THE BASE OF ALL METAPHYSICS

(1871)

And now gentlemen,
A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,
As base and final too for all metaphysics.

50

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

(So to the students the old professor,
At the Close of his crowded course.)

Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems,
Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling and Hegel, 5
Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato,
And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ divine having studied long,
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic systems,
See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets see,
Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath Christ the divine I see, 10
The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to friend,
Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and parents,
Of city for city and land for land.

A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

(1871, 1881)

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding, 20
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space, 25
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL

(1871, 1881)

Darest thou now O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow? 40

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land. 45

Till when the ties loosen, 50
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil O soul.

5

THE MYSTIC TRUMPETER

(1872, 1881)

1

10

Hark, some wild trumpeter, some strange musician,
Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious tunes to-night.

I hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I catch thy notes,
Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me,
Now low, subdued, now in the distance lost.

15

2

Come nearer bodiless one, haply in thee resounds
Some dead composer, haply thy pensive life
Was fill'd with aspirations high, uniform'd ideals,
Waves, oceans musical, chaotically surging,
That now ecstatic ghost, close to me bending, thy cornet echoing, pealing,
Gives out to no one's ears but mine, but freely gives to mine,
That I may thee translate.

20

25

3

Blow trumpeter free and clear, I follow thee,
While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,
The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of day withdraw,
A holy calm descends like dew upon me,
I walk in cool refreshing night the walks of Paradise,
I scent the grass, the moist air and the roses;
Thy song expands my numb'd imbonded spirit, thou freest, launchest me,
Floating and basking upon heaven's lake.

30

35

4

Blow again trumpeter! and for my sensuous eyes,
Bring the old pageants, show the feudal world.

40

What charm thy music works! thou makest pass before me,
Ladies and cavaliers long dead, barons are in their castle halls, the troubadours are singing,
Arm'd knights go forth to redress wrongs, some in quest of the holy Graal;
I see the tournament, I see the contestants incased in heavy armor seated on stately champing horses,
I hear the shouts, the sounds of blows and smiting steel;
I see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies—hark, how the cymbals clang,
Lo, where the monks walk in advance, bearing the cross on high.

45

5

Blow again trumpeter! and for thy theme,
Take now the enclosing theme of all, the solvent and the setting,
Love, that is pulse of all, the sustenance and the pang,

50

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The heart of man and woman all for love,
No other theme but love—knitting, enclosing, all-diffusing love.

O how the immortal phantoms crowd around me!
I see the vast alembic ever working, I see and know the flames that heat the world, 5
The glow, the blush, the beating hearts of lovers,
So blissful happy some, and some so silent, dark, and nigh to death;
Love, that is all the earth to lovers—love, that mocks time and space,
Love, that is day and night—love, that is sun and moon and stars,
Love, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with perfume, 10
No other words but words of love, no other thought but love.

6

Blow again trumpeter—conjure war's alarums. 15

Swift to thy spell a shuddering hum like distant thunder rolls,
Lo, where the arm'd men hasten—lo, 'mid the clouds of dust the glint of bayonets,
I see the grime-faced cannoneers, I mark the rosy flash amid the smoke, I hear the cracking of the
guns;
Nor war alone—thy fearful music-song, wild prayer, brings every sight of fear, 20
The deeds of ruthless brigands, rapine, murder—I hear the cries for help!
I see ships foundering at sea, I behold on deck and below deck the terrible tableaux.

7

O trumpeter, methinks I am myself the instrument thou playest, 25
Thou melt'st my heart, my brain—thou movest, drawest, changest them at will;
And now thy sullen notes send darkness through me,
Thou takest away all cheering light, all hope,
I see the enslaved, the overthrown, the hurt, the oppress of the whole earth,
I feel the measureless shame and humiliation of my race, it becomes all mine, 30
Mine too the revenges of humanity, the wrongs of ages, baffled feuds and hatreds,
Utter defeat upon me weighs—all lost—the foe victorious,
(Yet 'mid the ruins Pride colossal stands unshaken to the last,
Endurance, resolution to the last.)

8

Now trumpeter for thy close, 35
Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet,
Sing to my soul, renew its languishing faith and hope,
Rouse up my slow belief, give me some vision of the future, 40
Give me for once its prophecy and joy.

O glad, exulting, culminating song!
A vigor more than earth's is in thy notes, 45
Marches of victory—man disenthral'd—the conqueror at last,
Hymns to the universal God from universal man—all joy!
A reborn race appears—a perfect world, all joy!
Women and men in wisdom innocence and health—all joy!
Rioutous laughing bacchanals fill'd with joy!
War, sorrow, suffering gone—the rank earth purged—nothing but joy left! 50
The ocean fill'd with joy—the atmosphere all joy!
Joy! joy! in freedom, worship, love! joy in the ecstasy of life!
Enough to merely be! enough to breathe!
Joy! joy! all over joy!

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

(1876, 1881)

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
 Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
 (Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
 And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,) 5
 Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
 As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
 (Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)
 Far, far at sea, 10
 After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
 With reappearing day as now so happy and serene,
 The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
 The limpid spread of air cerulean,
 Thou also reappearest. 15
 Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings,)
 To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
 Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
 Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating, 20
 At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
 That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
 In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
 What joys! what joys were thine!
 25

TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

(1876, 1881)

Thee for my recitative,
 Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter-day declining,
 Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat convulsive, 30
 Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel,
 Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy sides,
 Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the distance,
 Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,
 Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple, 35
 The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack,
 Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,
 Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,
 Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
 Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power—pulse of the continent, 40
 For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I see thee,
 With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow,
 By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,
 By night thy silent signal lamps to swing. 45
 Fierce-throated beauty!
 Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging lamps at night,
 Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake, rousing all,
 Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding,
 (No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,) 50
 Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd,
 Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes,
 To the free skies unpent and glad and strong.

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WITH HUSKY-HAUGHTY LIPS, O SEA!

(1883; 1888-1889)

With husky-haughty lips, O sea!
Where day and night I wend thy surf-beat shore,
Imaging to my sense thy varied strange suggestions,
(I see and plainly list thy talk and conference here,) 5
Thy troops of white-maned racers racing to the goal,
Thy ample, smiling face, dash'd with the sparkling dimples of the sun,
Thy brooding scowl and murk—thy unloos'd hurricanes,
Thy unsubduedness, caprices, wilfulness;
Great as thou art above the rest, thy many tears—a lack from all eternity in thy content,
(Naught but the greatest struggles, wrongs, defeats, could make thee greatest—no less could make thee,)
Thy lonely state—something thou ever seek'st and seek'st, yet never gain'st,
Surely some right withheld—some voice, in huge monotonous rage, of freedom-lover pent,
Some vast heart, like a planet's, chain'd and chafing in those breakers,
By lengthen'd swell, and spasm, and panting breath, 15
And rhythmic rasping of thy sands and waves,
And serpent hiss, and savage peals of laughter,
And undertones of distant lion roar,
(Sounding, appealing to the sky's deaf ear—but now, rapport for once,
A phantom in the night thy confidant for once,)
The first and last confession of the globe, 20
Outsurging, muttering from thy soul's abysses,
The tale of cosmic elemental passion,
Thou tellest to a kindred soul.

25

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

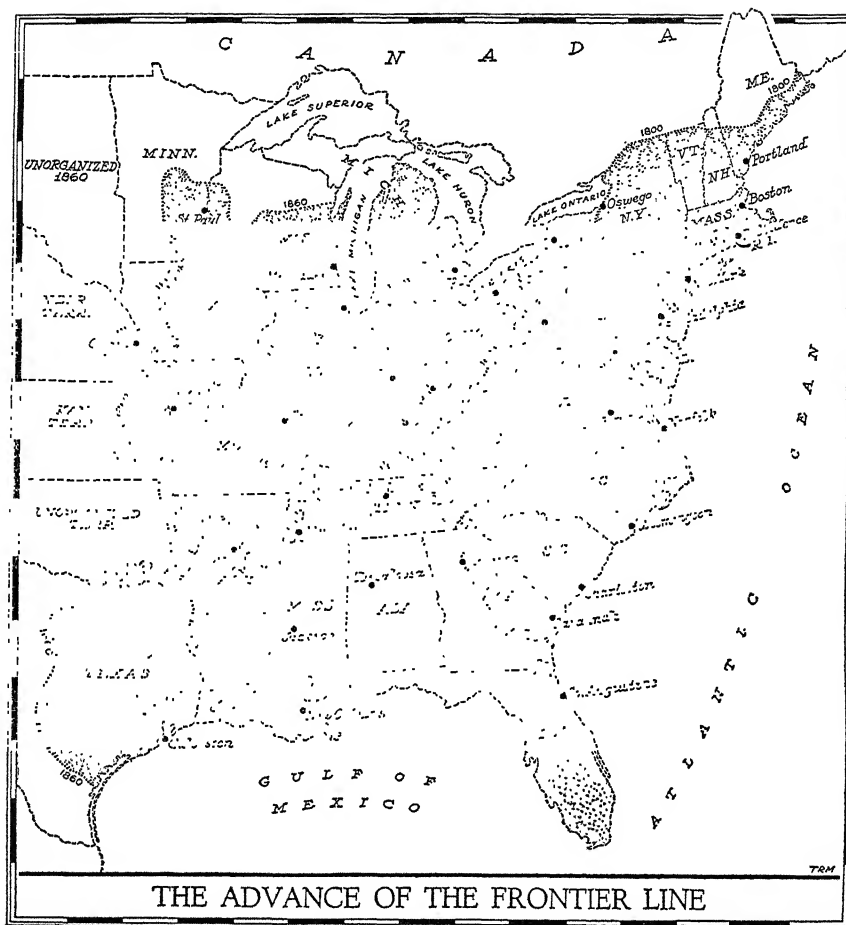
(1891)

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love! 30
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment; 35
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy. 40

Yet let me not be too hasty.
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens, 45
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.





EMILY DICKINSON

1830 - 1886

Biography first convinces us of the fleeing of the biographed.

—EMILY DICKINSON to COL. T. W. HIGGINSON in 1884.

*We never know how high we are
Till we are called to rise;
And then, if we are true to plan,
Our statures touch the skies.*

*The heroism we recite
Would be a daily thing,
Did not ourselves the cubits warp
For fear to be a king.*

—EMILY DICKINSON, "We Never Know How High."

Emily (Elizabeth) Dickinson was born in Amherst, Mass., on December 10, 1830. In this college town she lived practically all her life until her death on May 15, 1886. Her father, the austere Edward Dickinson, a lawyer and for many years the treasurer of Amherst College, was a dominating figure and something of a Puritan. Colonel Higginson described him as "thin, dry and speechless." After his death in 1874, Emily wrote, "His heart was pure and terrible, and I think no other like it exists." At the age of thirty-five she had written: "I got down before father this morning, and spent a few moments profitably with the South Sea rose. Father detecting me, advised wiser employment, and read at devotions the chapter of the gentleman with one talent. I think he thought my conscience would adjust the gender." The mother was an inconspicuous and gentle woman who, as Emily said, did not "care for thought."

As a girl, Emily was fond of music, books, and fun. She spent one year (1847–1848) at Mount Holyoke Seminary, where she knew Helen Fiske, who as Helen Hunt Jackson was to become a well-known writer. Emily was far from being the recluse that she became in later years. The seclusion into which she drifted imperceptibly was not, it now appears, due to a disap-

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pointment in love. "Emily's withdrawal," writes Mabel Loomis Todd, who knew her in later life, "was merely a normal blossoming of her own untouched spirit." "Emily," she says, "was more interested in her poems than in any man." Professor George F. Whicher points out that what Emily Dickinson expected of the men who became her special friends was not love but instruction, intellectual stimulus. She had at least four of these "tutors": Benjamin Franklin Newton, who studied law in her father's office; Leonard Humphrey, the principal of the Amherst Academy; the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, whom apparently Madame Bianchi regarded as the lover; and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. After Newton's death in 1853, Emily wrote: "Mr. Newton became to me a gentle, yet grave Preceptor, teaching me what to read, what authors to admire, what was most grand or beautiful in nature, and that sublime lesson, a faith in things unseen, and in a life again, nobler and much more blessed." Newton is apparently the mentor referred to in her letter to Colonel Higginson, June 7, 1862: "My dying tutor told me that he would like to live till I had been a poet, but Death was much of mob as I could master, then." Emily was given to idealizing the men she knew, attributing to them qualities they did not possess. The lover one meets in her poems is probably no more like the original than the actual Beatrice was like the idealized saint portrayed in Dante's *Paradiso*. As early as 1896 the Canadian poet Bliss Carman wrote:

"... this New England woman was a type of her race. A life-long recluse, musing on the mysteries of life and death, she had that stability of character, that strong sanity of mind, which could hold out against the perils of seclusion, unshaken by solitude, undethroned by doubt. It would never, I feel sure, occur to anyone with the least insight into the New England conscience (with its capacity for abstemiousness, its instinct for being always aloof and restrained rather than social and blithe) to think of Emily Dickinson as peculiar or her mode of life as queer."

Although some twenty of her poems were written before the Civil War, it was not until the winter of 1861-1862 that Emily Dickinson began to write in earnest. Only a handful of her poems were published in her lifetime and all but one or two of them without her consent. In 1884 Helen Hunt Jackson wrote to her: "What portfolios full of verses you must have! It is a cruel wrong to your 'day and generation' that you will not give them light." Emily, however, who once wrote:

*"Publication is the auction
Of the mind of man,"*

said to a friend, "How can you print a piece of your soul!"

In April, 1862, Colonel Higginson, the last of her "tutors," published in the *Atlantic Monthly* his "Letter to a Young Contributor," which Emily must have read. On April 15 she wrote him asking: "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?" Higginson, minister, abolitionist, reformer, and author, was impressed by the poems she sent him. "It would seem," he wrote after her death, "that at first I tried a little—a very little—to lead her in the direction of rules and traditions; but I fear it was only perfunctory, and that she interested me more in her—so to speak—unregenerate condition."

When Emily Dickinson died, in May, 1886, her sister Lavinia discovered hundreds of poems

in manuscript. None of the family, it seems, knew that Emily had written more than a few occasional verses. She left no instructions about the poems, but Lavinia decided that they must be published. Since she was incapable of preparing the poems for publication, Lavinia turned to Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, whose husband was professor of astronomy in Amherst College. On examining the mass of manuscript, Mrs. Todd found that some of the poems had been put into something like final form but that many were "written on margins of newspapers, on grocers' brown paper bags, on backs of envelopes, or other homely medium, and some of the finest [poems] were among them." Deciphering Emily's difficult handwriting, copying the poems in legible form for the printer, choosing the best among many variant readings involved prolonged and difficult work. Colonel Higginson gave Mrs. Todd some assistance in selecting poems for publication, and together they made certain changes in them to make them acceptable to readers of the 'nineties. When the Houghton Mifflin Company declined the manuscript, they took it to a friend of Emily's, Thomas Niles of Roberts Brothers in Boston. The first and second series of the poems appeared in 1890 and 1891; a third series, edited by Mrs. Todd alone, appeared in 1896. In 1894 Mrs. Todd had brought out the *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (revised and enlarged edition in 1931).

The work of preparing the remainder of the poems for publication was in full swing and the public's reception was on the whole favorable when Emily's brother Austin died in August, 1895. It was he who had kept under control the growing enmity between his sister Lavinia and his wife Sue Dickinson. To make matters worse, Lavinia grew jealous of Mrs. Todd, who was often invited to lecture on Emily's life and work. Before his death Austin Dickinson had made arrangements to give to Mrs. Todd out of the family estate a strip of land next to her home because he felt that she had not been adequately paid for her editorial labors. Lavinia, after signing the deed, changed her mind and brought suit against Mrs. Todd. Naturally, Mrs. Todd stopped her work on the unpublished poems. The circumstances which led to the end of her work were not fully known until in 1945 her daughter, Mrs. Millicent Todd Bingham, published *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Début of Emily Dickinson*. In the same year Mrs. Bingham brought out *Bolts of Melody: New Poems of Emily Dickinson*, which contains some of the very finest of all the poems. The appearance of these two volumes has rendered obsolete much of what had been written about Emily Dickinson.

Meanwhile, Madame Bianchi, daughter of Austin and Sue Dickinson, had published a series of books: *The Single Hound* (1914), which appeared when interest in the "New Poetry" was increasing; *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1924); *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1924), far from complete; *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1929); *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (1932); and *Unpublished Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1936). The poems in these volumes are genuine, but as Mrs. Bingham and other scholars have pointed out, the editing is careless and inaccurate and the biographical details are often undependable. Madame Bianchi's greatest error was to resurrect the old story of Emily's disappointment in love.

In the 1890's Emily Dickinson's unconventional poems were received much more favorably than one would have anticipated. Typical perhaps was the verdict of Arlo Bates, who read the manuscript of the 1890 volume for Roberts Brothers: "There is hardly one of these poems which does not bear marks of unusual and remarkable talent; there is hardly one of them which is not marked by an extraordinary crudity of workmanship." Thomas Bailey Aldrich,

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whose ear disapproved of approximate rhymes, suggested that the following stanza could be easily amended:

*"I taste a liquor never brewed
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol."*

This is Aldrich's version:

*"I taste a liquor never brewed
In vats upon the Rhine:
No tankards scooped in pearl could yield
An alcohol like mine."*

A sounder estimate came from William Dean Howells, who wrote in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1891:

"Occasionally the outside of the poem, so to speak, is left so rough, so rude, that the art seems to have faltered. But there is apparent to reflection the fact that the artist meant just this harsh exterior to remain, and that no grace of smoothness could have imparted her intention as it does. . . . If nothing else had come out of our life but this strange poetry we should feel that in the work of Emily Dickinson America, or New England, rather, had made a distinctive addition to the literature of the world, and could not be left out of any record of it."

For reasons now obvious there is no definitive edition of Emily Dickinson's poems, and there is no thoroughly satisfactory biography. The best of the lives is George F. Whicher's *This Was a Poet: A Critical Biography of Emily Dickinson* (1938), prepared without any assistance from the Dickinson family: see also his sketches in the *D. A. B.* and *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. Other materials of greater or less value are: Henry W. Wells, *Introduction to Emily Dickinson* (1947); Josephine Pollitt, *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background of Her Poetry* (1930); MacGregor Jenkins, *Emily Dickinson: Friend and Neighbor* (1930); Genevieve Taggard, *The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson* (1930); Sister Mary James Power, *In the Name of the Bee: The Significance of Emily Dickinson* (1943); R. P. Blackmur, *The Expense of Greatness* (1940); Gamaliel Bradford, *Portraits of American Women* (1919); Rollo Walter Brown, *Lonely Americans* (1929). See also Conrad Aiken's Introduction to *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1924); and Anna Mary Wells, "Early Criticism of Emily Dickinson," *American Literature*, I, 243-259 (November, 1929). There are bibliographies by Alfred Leete Hampson and George F. Whicher. The books of greatest value are those, already mentioned, which were edited by Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Bingham. See also Millicent Todd Bingham, "Poems of Emily Dickinson Hitherto Published Only in Part," *New England Quarterly*, XX, 3-50 (March, 1947); John Erskine, "The Dickinson Saga," *Yale Review*, XXXV, 74-83 (September, 1945); and George F. Whicher, "In Emily Dickinson's Garden," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLXXVII, 64-70 (February, 1946). Other materials are listed in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

LETTERS*

TO COL. T. W. HIGGINSON

"On April 16, 1862," says Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "I took from the post-office in Worcester, Massachusetts, where I was then living, the following letter." In it Emily Dickinson had enclosed four of her poems. The letter was without signature, but was accompanied by a card bearing her name.

[April 15, 1862.]

MR. HIGGINSON,—Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?

The mind is so near itself it cannot see distinctly, and I have none to ask.

Should you think it breathed, and had you the leisure to tell me, I should feel quick gratitude.

If I make the mistake, that you dared to tell me would give me sincerer honor toward you.

I enclose my name, asking you, if you please, sir, to tell me what is true?

That you will not betray me it is needless to ask, since honor is its own pawn.

TO COL. T. W. HIGGINSON

[April 25, 1862.]

MR. HIGGINSON,—Your kindness claimed earlier gratitude, but I was ill, and write today from my pillow.

Thank you for the surgery; it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others, as you ask, though they might not differ. While my thought is undressed, I can make the distinction; but when I put them in the gown, they look alike and numb.

You asked how old I was? I made no verse, but one or two, until this winter, sir.

I had a terror since September, I could tell to none; and so I sing, as the boy does of the burying ground, because I am afraid.

You inquire my books. For poets, I have Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Browning. For prose, Mr. Ruskin, Sir Thomas Browne, and the *Revelations*. I went to school, but in your manner of the

* The selections from Emily Dickinson's letters, including the letter by T. W. Higginson, are reprinted by permission of Mrs. Millicent Todd Bingham from *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (New and Enlarged Edition, 1931), edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and published by Harper & Brothers.

phrase had no education. When a little girl, I had a friend who taught me Immortality; but venturing too near, himself, he never returned. Soon after, my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land.

You ask of my companions. Hills, sir, and the sundown, and a dog large as myself, that my father bought me. They are better than beings because they know, but do not tell; and the noise in the pool at noon excels my piano.

I have a brother and sister; my mother does not care for thought, and father, too busy with his briefs to notice what we do. He buys me many books, but begs me not to read them, because he fears they joggle the mind. They are religious, except me, and address an eclipse, every morning, whom they call their "Father."

But I fear my story fatigues you. I would like to learn. Could you tell me how to grow, or is it unconveyed, like melody or witchcraft?

You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his book but was told that he was disgraceful.

I read Miss Prescott's *Circumstance*, but it followed me in the dark, so I avoided her.

Two editors of journals came to my father's house this winter, and asked me for my mind, and when I asked them "why" they said I was penurious, and they would use it for the world.

I could not weigh myself, myself. My size felt small to me. I read your chapters¹ in *The Atlantic*, and experienced honor for you. I was sure you would not reject a confiding question.

Is this, sir, what you asked me to tell you?

Your friend,

E. DICKINSON.

TO COL. T. W. HIGGINSON

[June 7, 1862]

DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter gave no drunkenness, because I tasted rum before. Domingo comes but once; yet I have had few pleasures so deep as your opinion, and if I tried to thank you, my tears would block my tongue.

My dying tutor [B. F. Newton?] told me that he would like to live till I had been a poet, but Death was much of mob as I could master, then.

¹ "Letter to a Young Contributor," *Atlantic Monthly* (April, 1862).

And when, far afterward, a sudden light on orchards, or a new fashion in the wind troubled my attention, I felt a palsy, here, the verses just relieve.

Your second letter surprised me, and for a moment, swung. I had not supposed it. Your first gave no dishonor, because the true are not ashamed. I thanked you for your justice, but could not drop the bells whose jingling cooled my tramp. Perhaps the balm seemed better, because you bled me first. I smile when you suggest that I delay "to publish," that being foreign to my thought as firmament to fin.

If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her; if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase, and the approbation of my dog would forsake me then. My barefoot rank is better.

You think my gait "spasmodic." I am in danger, sir. You think me "uncontrolled." I have no tribunal.

Would you have time to be the "friend" you should think I need? I have a little shape: it would not crowd your desk, nor make much racket as the mouse that dents your galleries.

If I might bring you what I do—not so frequent to trouble you—and ask you if I told it clear, 'twould be control to me. The sailor cannot see the north, but knows the needle can. The "hand you stretch me in the dark" I put mine in, and turn away. I have no Saxon now:

*As if I asked a common alms,
And in my wondering hand
A stranger pressed a kingdom,
And I, bewildered, stand;
As if I asked the Orient
Had it for me a morn,
And it should lift its purple dikes
And shatter me with dawn!*

But, will you be my preceptor, Mr. Higginson?

Your friend,

E. DICKINSON.

TO COL. T. W. HIGGINSON

[*July, 1862*]

Could you believe me without? I had no portrait, now, but am small, like the wren; and my hair is bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves. Would this do just as well?

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It often alarms father. He says death might occur, and he has molds of all the rest, but has no mold of me; but I noticed the quick wore off those things in a few days, and forestall the dishonor. You will think no caprice of me.

You said "dark." I know the butterfly, and the lizard, and the orchis. Are not those *your* countrymen?

I am happy to be your scholar, and will deserve the kindness I cannot repay.

If you truly consent, I recite now. Will you tell me my fault, frankly, as to yourself, for I had rather wince than die. Men do not call the surgeon to commend the bone, but to set it, sir, and fracture within is more critical. And for this, preceptor, I shall bring you obedience, the blossom from my garden, and every gratitude I know.

Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that. My business is circumference. An ignorance, not of customs, but if caught with the dawn, or the sunset see me, myself the only kangaroo among the beauty, sir, if you please, it afflicts me, and I thought that instruction would take it away.

Because you have much business, beside the growth of me, you will appoint, yourself, how often I shall come without your inconvenience.

And if at any time you regret you received me, or I prove a different fabric to that you supposed, you must banish me.

When I state myself, as the representative of the verse, it does not mean me, but a supposed person.

You are true about the "perfection." Today makes yesterday mean.

You spoke of *Pippa Passes*. I never heard anybody speak of *Pippa Passes* before. You see my posture is benighted.

To thank you baffles me. Are you perfectly powerful? Had I a pleasure you had not, I could delight to bring it.

YOUR SCHOLAR.

COL. T. W. HIGGINSON TO HIS WIFE

AMHERST, *Tuesday*,

Aug. 16, 1870, 10 p. m.

I shan't sit up tonight to write you all about E. D., dearest, but if you had read Mrs. Stoddard's novels you could understand a house

where each member runs his or her own selves.
Yet I only saw her.

A large country lawyer's house, brown brick,
with great trees and a garden. I sent up my card.
A parlor dark and cool and stiffish, a few books
and engravings and an open piano—*Malbone*
and *O. D. [Out Door] Papers*¹ among other
books.

A step like a pattering child's in entry and in
glided a little plain woman with two smooth
bands of reddish hair and a face a little like
Belle Dove's, not plainer, with no good feature
—in a very plain and exquisitely clean white
piqué and a blue net worsted shawl. She came to
me with two day lilies, which she put in a sort of
childlike way into my hand and said, "These are
my introduction," in a soft, frightened, breath-
less, childlike voice—and added under her
breath, "Forgive me if I am frightened; I never
see strangers and hardly know what I say"—but
she talked soon and thenceforward continuously
—and deferentially—sometimes stopping to ask
me to talk instead of her—but readily recom-
mencing. Manner between Angie Tilton and
Mr. Alcott, but thoroughly ingenuous and simple
—which they are not, and saying many things
which you would have thought foolish and I
wise—and some things you would have liked. I
add a few over the page. . . .

I got here at two and leave at nine. E. D.
dreamed all night of *you* (not me) and next day
got my letters proposing to come here!! She only
knew of you through a mention in my notice of
Charlotte Hawes.

"Women talk; men are silent. That is why I
dread women."

"My father only reads on Sunday. He reads
lonely and *rigorous* books."

"If I read a book and it makes my whole body
so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know *that*
is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my
head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry. These
are the only ways I know it. Is there any other
way?"

"How do most people live without any
thoughts? There are many people in the world
(you must have noticed them in the street), how
do they live? How do they get strength to put
on their clothes in the morning?"

"When I lost the use of my eyes it was a com-

¹ These books are by Higginson.

fort to think there were so few real books that I
could easily find someone to read me all of
them."

"Truth is such a rare thing, it is delightful to
tell it."

"I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of
living is joy enough." I asked if she never felt
want of employment, never going off the place,
and never seeing any visitor.

"I never thought of conceiving that I could
ever have the slightest approach to such a want
in all future time," and added, "I feel that I
have not expressed myself strongly enough."

She makes all the bread for her father only
likes hers and says, "and people must have pud-
dings," this *very* dreamily as if they were comets,
so she makes them.

[A Valentine]*

(1852; 1894)

Sic transit gloria mundi,¹
How doth the busy bee—
Dum vivimus vivamus,²
I stay mine enemy.

Oh, *veni, vidi, vici*,
Oh, *caput, cap-a-pie*,
And oh, *memento mori*
When I am far from thee.

Hurrah for Peter Parley,
Hurrah for Daniel Boone,
Three cheers, sir, for the gentlemen
Who first observed the moon.

Peter put up the sunshine,
Pattie arrange the stars,
Tell Luna tea is waiting,
And call your brother Mars.

Put down the apple, Adam,
And come away with me;

* "[A Valentine]," "It is not Dying Hurts Us So,"
"A Word is Dead when it is Said," "There is no
Frigate like a Book," and "The Going from a World
We Know" are reprinted by permission of Mrs. Milli-
cent Todd Bingham from *Letters of Emily Dickinson*
(New and Enlarged Edition, 1931), edited by Mabel
Loomis Todd and published by Harper & Brothers.

¹ Thus passes away the glory of the world.

² While we live, let us live.

So shall thou have a pippin
From off my father's tree.

I climb the hill of science
"I view the landscape o'er,"
Such transcendental prospect
I ne'er beheld before.

Unto the Legislature
My country bids me go.
I'll take my india-rubbers,
In case the wind should blow.

During my education,
It was announced to me
That gravitation, stumbling,
Fell from an apple-tree.

The earth upon its axis
Was once supposed to turn,
By way of a gymnastic
In honor to the sun.

It was the brave Columbus,
A-sailing on the tide,
Who notified the nations
Of where I would reside.

Mortality is fatal,
Gentility is fine,
Rascality heroic,
Insolvency sublime.

Our fathers being weary
Lay down on Bunker Hill,
And though full many a morning,
Yet they are sleeping still.

The trumpet, sir, shall wake them,
In dream I see them rise,
Each with a solemn musket
A-marching to the skies.

A coward will remain, sir,
Until the fight is done,
But an immortal hero
Will take his hat and run.

Good-by, sir, I am going—
My country calleth me.
Allow me, sir, at parting
To wipe my weeping e'e.

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In token of our friendship
Accept this *Bonnie Doon*,
And when the hand that plucked it
Has passed beyond the moon,

The memory of my ashes
Will consolation be.
Then farewell, Tuscarora,
And farewell, sir, 'to thee.

IT IS NOT DYING HURTS US SO

(1863; 1894)

15 Sent to her cousins Louisa and Frances Norcross
after the death of their father on January 7, 1863.

It is not dying hurts us so,—
'Tis living hurts us more;
But dying is a different way,
A kind, behind the door,—
The southern custom of the bird
That soon as frosts are due
Adopts a better latitude.
25 We are the birds that stay,
The shiverers round farmers' doors,
For whose reluctant crumb
We stipulate, till pitying snows
Persuade our feathers home.

A WORD IS DEAD WHEN IT IS SAID

(1872; 1896)

35 A word is dead when it is said,
Some say.
I say it just begins to live
That day.

THERE IS NO FRIGATE LIKE A BOOK

(1873; 1894)

45 "I think of your little parlor as the poets once
thought of Windermere,—peace, sunshine, and
books," wrote Emily as she sent this poem to Louisa
and Frances Norcross.

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.

50

This traverse may the poorest take,
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears the human soul!

5

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

THE GOING FROM A WORLD WE KNOW

(1884; 1894)

The going from a world we know
To one a wonder still
Is like the child's adversity
Whose vista is a hill,
Behind the hill is sorcery
And everything unknown,
But will the secret compensate
For climbing it alone?

THIS IS MY LETTER TO THE WORLD

(1890)

This is my letter to the world,
That never wrote to me,—
The simple news that Nature told,
With tender majesty.

Her message is committed
To hands I cannot see;
For love of her, sweet countrymen,
Judge tenderly of me!

I LIKE TO SEE IT LAP THE MILES

(1891)

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

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HOW HAPPY IS THE LITTLE STONE

(1891)

How happy is the little stone
That rambles in the road alone,
And doesn't care about careers,
And exigencies never fears;
Whose coat of elemental brown
A passing universe put on;
And independent as the sun,
Associates or glows alone,
Fulfilling absolute decree
In casual simplicity.

A ROUTE OF EVANESCENCE

(1891)

A route of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald,
A rush of cochineal;
And every blossom on the bush
Adjusts its tumbled head,—
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning's ride.

TO HEAR AN ORIOLE SING

(1891)

To hear an oriole sing
May be a common thing,
Or only a divine.

It is not of the bird
Who sings the same, unheard,
As unto crowd.

The fashions of the ear
Attireth that it hear
In dun or fair.

So whether it be rune,
Or whether it be none,
Is of within;

The "tune is in the tree,"
The sceptic showeth me;
"No, sir! In thee!"

THE DAY CAME SLOW, TILL FIVE O'CLOCK

(1891)

The day came slow, till five o'clock,
Then sprang before the hills
Like hindered rubies, or the light
A sudden musket spills.

The purple could not keep the east,
The sunrise shook from fold,
Like breadths of topaz, packed a night,
The lady just unrolled.

The happy winds their timbrels took;
The birds, in docile rows,
Arranged themselves around their prince
(The wind is prince of those).

The orchard sparkled like a Jew,—
How mighty 'twas, to stay
A guest in this stupendous place,
The parlor of the day!

I'LL TELL YOU HOW THE SUN ROSE

(1890)

I'll tell you how the sun rose,—
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.
Then I said softly to myself,
"That must have been the sun!"

.

But how he set, I know not.
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

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I TASTE A LIQUOR NEVER BREWED

(1890)

5 I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

10 Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

15 When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

20 Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

THE SKY IS LOW, THE CLOUDS ARE MEAN

(1890)

30 The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

35 A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

HE ATE AND DRANK THE PRECIOUS WORDS

(1890)

45 He ate and drank the precious words,
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his fame was dust.
He danced along the dingy days,
50 And this bequest of wings
Was but a book. What liberty
A loosened spirit brings!

I NEVER SAW A MOOR

(1890)

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST

(1878, 1890)

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear.

I'M NOBODY! WHO ARE YOU?

(1891)

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

MUCH MADNESS IS DIVINEST SENSE

(1890)

Much madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'Tis the majority

In this, as all, prevails.
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur,—you're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

5

HE PREACHED UPON "BREADTH"

(1891)

10 He preached upon "breadth" till it argued him
narrow,—

The broad are too broad to define;
And of "truth" until it proclaimed him a liar,—
The truth never flaunted a sign.

15

Simplicity fled from his counterfeit presence
As gold the pyrites would shun.
What confusion would cover the innocent Jesus
To meet so enabled a man!

20

ELYSIUM IS AS FAR

(1890)

25

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

30

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door!

35

APPARENTLY WITH NO SURPRISE

(1890)

Apparently with no surprise
To any happy flower,
The frost beheads it at its play
In accidental power.
The blond assassin passes on,
The sun proceeds unmoved
To measure off another day
For an approving God.

40

45

**THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT
OF LIGHT**

(1890)

50

There's a certain slant of light,
On winter afternoons,

That oppresses, like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything.
'Tis the seal, despair,—
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death.

I DIED FOR BEAUTY

(1890)

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,—the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips,
And covered up our names.

I NEVER LOST AS MUCH BUT TWICE

(1890)

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod;
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,
Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

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IF YOU WERE COMING IN THE FALL

(1890)

5 If you were coming in the fall,
I'd brush the summer by
With half a smile and half a spurn,
As housewives do a fly.

10 If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls,
And put them each in separate drawers,
Until their time befalls.

15 If only centuries delayed,
I'd count them on my hand,
Subtracting till my fingers dropped
Into Van Diemen's land.

20 If certain, when this life was out,
That yours and mine should be,
I'd toss it yonder like a rind,
And taste eternity.

25 But now, all ignorant of the length
Of time's uncertain wing,
It goads me, like the goblin bee,
That will not state its sting.

PRESENTIMENT

(1890)

Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn
Indicative that suns go down;

35 The notice to the startled grass
That darkness is about to pass.

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

(1890)

45 Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

50 We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

THE BUSTLE IN A HOUSE

(1890)

The bustle in a house
The morning after death
Is solemn of industries
Enacted upon earth,—

The sweeping up the heart,
And putting love away
We shall not want to use again
Until eternity.

AS IMPERCEPTIBLY AS GRIEF

(1891)

As imperceptibly as grief
The summer lapsed away,—
Too imperceptible, at last,
To seem like perfidy.

A quietness distilled,
As twilight long begun,
Or Nature, spending with herself
Sequestered afternoon.

The dusk drew earlier in,
The morning foreign shone,—
A courteous, yet harrowing grace,
As guest who would be gone.

And thus, without a wing,
Or service of a keel
Our summer made her light escape
Into the beautiful.

MY LIFE CLOSED TWICE BEFORE ITS CLOSE*

(1896)

5 My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

10 So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

15

HEART, WE WILL FORGET HIM!

(1896)

Heart, we will forget him!
20 You and I, to-night!
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

25 When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

30

TO FIGHT ALOUD IS VERY BRAVE

(1890)

To fight aloud is very brave,
35 But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

40 Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

45 We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

* This poem and the one which immediately follows it are reprinted from *Poems by Emily Dickinson*, edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Copyright, 1896, by Roberts Brothers. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

I WOULD NOT PAINT A PICTURE*

(1945)

I would not paint a picture.
I'd rather be the one 5
Its bright impossibility
To dwell delicious on,
And wonder how the fingers feel
Whose rare celestial stir
Evokes so sweet a torment, 10
Such sumptuous despair.

I would not talk like cornets.
I'd rather be the one
Raised softly to horizons 15
And out, and easy on
Through villages of ether,
Myself endued balloon
By but a lip of metal,
The pier to my pontoon. 20

Nor would I be a poet.
It's finer own the ear,
Enamored, impotent, content
The license to revere— 25
A privilege so awful
What would the dower be
Had I the art to stun myself
With bolts of melody! 30

THE BIRDS BEGUN AT FOUR
O'CLOCK

(1945)

The birds begun at four o'clock—
Their period for dawn—
A music numerous as space
And measureless as noon. 40

I could not count their force,
Their voices did expend
As brook by brook bestows itself
To magnify the pond. 45

Their listener was none
Except occasional man

*This poem and the ten which follow it are from
Bolts of Melody, New Poems of Emily Dickinson,
edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Millicent Todd
Bingham, published by Harper & Brothers. Copy-
right, 1945, by Millicent Todd Bingham. 50

In homely industry arrayed
To overtake the morn.

Nor was it for applause
That I could ascertain,
But independent ecstasy
Of universe and men.

By six the flood had done,
No tumult there had been
Of dressing or departure,
Yet all the band was gone.

The sun engrossed the east,
The day controlled the world,
The miracle that introduced
Forgotten as fulfilled.

BLOOM IS RESULT

(1945)

Bloom is result. To meet a flower
And casually glance
Would cause one scarcely to suspect
The minor circumstance

Assisting in the bright affair
So intricately done,
Then offered as a butterfly
To the meridian.

To pack the bud, oppose the worm,
Obtain its right of dew,
Adjust the heat, elude the wind,
Escape the prowling bee,

Great nature not to disappoint
Awaiting her that day—
To be a flower is profound
Responsibility!

FLOWERS—WELL, IF ANYBODY

(1945)

Flowers—well, if anybody
Can the ecstasy define,
Half a transport, half a trouble,
With which flowers humble men,
Anybody find the fountain
From which floods so contra flow,

I will give him all the daisies
Which upon the hillside blow.

Too much pathos in their faces
For a simple breast like mine.
Butterflies from San Domingo
Cruising round the purple line
Have a system of æsthetics
Far superior to mine.

Between himself and horror's twin
Within opposing cells.

5 I almost strove to clasp his hand,
Such luxury it grew
That as myself could pity him
Perhaps he pitied me.

10 REARRANGE A WIFE'S AFFECTION?
(1945)

15 Rearrange a wife's affection?
When they dislocate my brain,
Amputate my freckled bosom,
Make me bearded like a man!

20 Blush, my spirit, in thy fastness,
Blush, my unacknowledged clay,
Seven years of troth have taught thee
More than wifehood ever may!

25 Love that never leaped its socket,
Trust entrenched in narrow pain,
Constancy through fire awarded,
Anguish bare of anodyne,

30 Burden borne so far triumphant
None suspect me of the crown,
For I wear the thorns till sunset,
Then my diadem put on.

35 Big my secret, but it's bandaged,
It will never get away
Till the day its weary keeper
Leads it through the grave to thee.

40 I LEARNED AT LAST WHAT HOME
COULD BE
(1945)

45 I learned at last what home could be,
How ignorant I had been
Of pretty ways of covenant,
How awkward at the hymn

50 Round our new fireside, but for this,
This pattern of the way,
Whose memory drowns me like the dip
Of a celestial sea.

THE SPIDER HOLDS A SILVER BALL

(1945)

The spider holds a silver ball
In unperceivèd hands
And dancing softly to himself
His yarn of pearl unwinds.

He plies from naught to naught
In unsubstantial trade,
Supplants our tapestries with his
In half the period—

An hour to rear supreme
His theories of light,
Then dangle from the housewife's broom,
His sophistries forgot.

I TRIED TO THINK A LONELIER
THING

(1945)

I tried to think a lonelier thing
Than any I had seen—
Some polar expiation,
An omen in the bone

Of death's tremendous nearness—
I probed retrieveless things
My duplicate to borrow.
A haggard comfort springs

From the belief that somewhere
Within the clutch of thought
There dwells one other creature
Of Heavenly Love forgot.

I plucked at our partition,
As one should try the walls

What mornings in our garden, guessed,
 What bees for us to hum,
 With only birds to interrupt
 The ripple of our theme.

5

And task for both when play be done,
 Your problem of the brain,
 And mine some foolisher effect,
 A ruffle, or a tune.

The afternoons together spent,
 And twilight in the lanes,
 Some ministry to poorer lives
 Seen poorest through our gains.

And then return, and night and home,
 A new diviner care,
 Till sunrise call us back to scene
 Transmuted, vivider.

This seems a home and home is not,
 But what that place could be
 Afflicts me as a setting sun
 Where dawn knows how to be!

YOU CONSTITUTED TIME

(1945)

You constituted time.
 I deemed eternity
 A revelation of yourself.
 'Twas therefore Deity.

The Absolute removed
 The relative away,
 That I unto Himself adjust
 My slow idolatry.

YOUR THOUGHTS DON'T HAVE WORDS EVERY DAY

(1945)

Your thoughts don't have words every day,
 They come a single time
 Like signal esoteric sips
 Of sacramental wine,

Which while you taste so native seems,
 So bounteous, so free,
 You cannot comprehend its worth
 Nor its infrequency.

FAME OF MYSELF TO JUSTIFY!

(1945)

Fame of myself to justify!
 All other plaudit be
 Superfluous, an incense
 Beyond necessity.

Fame of myself to lack, although
 My name be else supreme,
 This were an honor honorless,
 A futile diadem.

SIDNEY LANIER

1842 - 1881

*Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain thou not, O heart; for these
Bank-in the current of the will
To uses, arts, and charities.*

LANIER, "Opposition."

Lanier was born in Macon, Georgia, on February 3, 1842; he died at Lynn in the mountains of North Carolina on September 7, 1881, at the age of thirty-nine. His early education was somewhat irregular, but he soon developed a passion for music and a love for literature. At the Presbyterian college, Oglethorpe University, from which he graduated in 1860, he was known as an excellent student and a fine flute-player. At Oglethorpe he was greatly influenced by one of his teachers, James Woodrow, who was a liberal in theology and an admirer of German literature and philosophy. While in college, Lanier wrote in his notebook:

"I'm more than all perplexed by this fact, that the prime inclination, that is, natural bent (which I have checked, though) of my nature is to music, and for that I have the greatest talent; . . . But I cannot bring myself to believe that I was intended for a musician, because it seems so small a business in comparison with other things which, it seems to me, I might do. Question here, What is the province of music in the economy of the world?"

In Macon and at Oglethorpe—as in most parts of America even today—music and poetry were regarded primarily as amusements.

The year following his graduation Lanier was a tutor at Oglethorpe, dreaming of preparing himself at the University of Heidelberg for a professorship, as Woodrow had done. Then came the Civil War. With his brother, Clifford, Lanier joined the Macon Volunteers. In 1862, after going through the Seven Days' Battle around Richmond, the brothers were transferred to the signal service. In leisure moments Lanier worked on *Tiger-Lilies*, a novel which was published in 1867. In August, 1864, while he was signal officer on a blockade-runner, he was captured and sent to the federal prison at Point Lookout, Maryland. John Banister (Father) Tabb, the poet, was in the same prison. Conditions at Point Lookout were little if any better than in the Confederate prisons, and when Lanier, discharged, started for home in February, 1865, he was dangerously ill. From then until his death sixteen years later his life was a fight against tuberculosis.

Ten years after his release, Lanier was to write to Bayard Taylor: "Perhaps you know that, with us of the younger generation in the South since the war, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying." The South in the years following the Civil War was not the ideal place for a young poet or musician. Lanier worked for a time in a hotel in Montgomery, Alabama. At another time he taught school. In 1867 he married Mary Day, of Macon, who proved as devoted a wife as ever poet married. The practical course for the young married man seemed to be to study law and practice with his father, and this he decided to do. In 1872, after a breakdown, he went to San Antonio, Texas, to recuperate. It was about this time that he made up his mind to give up the law for music and poetry (a strong secondary interest) and go North where he might accomplish something in music and literature. The selections which we give from his letters to his wife throw light upon his experiences as a musician. While first flutist for the Peabody Orchestra in Baltimore, he made some important contacts. One of his new friends, Bayard Taylor, whose reputation was then considerable, helped to place Lanier's poems in magazines and got him the commission to write the Centennial Cantata for the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. In Baltimore Lanier lectured on literature to classes of adults. In 1879 he was appointed Lecturer in English Literature at the newly established Johns Hopkins University. Financial necessity drove him to do a considerable amount of what was almost hack writing. Periodically, he had to give up his work and seek a milder climate in order to continue to live. All the while he was reading and studying feverishly; he had said of Poe that he did not know enough to be a great poet. His interest in poetry had grown stronger, and he was beginning to mature his very original poetic talents. In 1877 he published a volume (*Poems*) of ten poems which had appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine*, and in 1880 he published *The Science of English Verse*, which reveals close study of poetic technique. Lanier's conception of the poet's mission is similar to Emerson's; in the practice of his craft he is closer to Poe. He believed the poet should be a prophet, but it is the music rather than the message which impresses most readers. His diction seems archaic, but his ideas and his technique make him a forerunner of the later poets.

There was no collected edition of Lanier's poems until 1884, when Mrs. Lanier's edition, *Poems of Sidney Lanier*, appeared. Largely through her efforts the posthumous works were published: *The English Novel* (1883), *Music and Poetry* (1898), *Letters of Sidney Lanier* (1899), *Retrospects and Prospects* (1899), *Shakspeare and his Forerunners* (1902), and *Poem Outlines* (1908). Edwin Mims's excellent brief biography (1905) in the American Men of Letters series, which stresses the Southern aspects of Lanier's life and work, brought a fuller recognition of the poet's character and of the difficulties under which he had worked. A later biographical and critical study (1933) by Aubrey H. Starke emphasizes the national aspects of Lanier's work and contains much illuminating criticism. In 1939 Philip Graham and Joseph Jones brought out *A Concordance to the Poems of Sidney Lanier*. Further references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947). In 1946 the Johns Hopkins Press brought out the ten-volume Centennial Edition of Lanier's *Writings* under the general editorship of Professor Charles R. Anderson. This edition, which is one of the finest examples of American scholarship in its field, is based primarily upon the large collection of Lanier manuscripts now in the library of Johns Hopkins University. The new edition makes available a large number of hitherto unpublished Lanier letters. One of the best critical essays on Lanier is that by Stanley T. Williams in John Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931). Mr.

Starke's estimate of Lanier's poetry is similar to that of John Macy, who wrote in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913): "Three volumes of unimpeachable poetry have been written in America: 'Leaves of Grass,' the thin volume of Poe, and the poetry of Sidney Lanier." If this estimate seems too high, it is clear that Lanier was at least the most important American poet, except Emily Dickinson, to emerge between the Civil War and the end of the century.

LETTERS* TO HIS WIFE

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Jany 30th 1873

Last night at eight o'clock came Mr. *Scheidemantel*, a genuine lover of music and fine pianist, to take me to the *Männer-chor*, which meets every Wednesday night for practice. Quickly we came to a hall, one end of which was occupied by a minute stage, with appurtenances, and a piano: and in the middle thereof, a long table at which each singer sat down as he came in. Presently, seventeen Germans were seated at this singing-table, long-necked bottles of Rhine Wine were opened and tasted, great pipes and segars were all a-fire, the leader, Herr *Thielepape* (pron. nearly *Teelypapper*)—an old man with long white beard and moustache, formerly Mayor of the City—rapped his tuning-fork vigorously, gave the chords by rapid arpeggios of his voice, (a wonderful wild high tenor such as thou wouldst dream that the old Welsh harpers had, wherewith to sing songs that would cut against the fierce sea-blasts) and off they all swung into such a noble, noble old German full-voiced *lied*, that imperious tears rushed into my eyes, I could scarce restrain myself from running and kissing each one in turn and from howling dolefully the while. And so, O my Heart,—I all the time worshipping thee with these great chords and calling upon thee to listen and to love with me—, we drove through the evening until twelve o'clock, absorbing enormous quantities of Rhine Wine and beer whereof I imbibed my full share. After the second song, I was called on to play—

and lifted my poor old flute in air with tumultuous beating heart for I had no confidence either in that or in myself. But, du Himmell! Thou shouldst have heard mine old love warble herself forth. To my utter astonishment, I was perfect master of the instrument. Is not this most strange? Thou knowest I had never learned it: and thou rememberest what a poor muddle I made at Marietta in playing difficult passages: and I *certainly* have not practiced: and yet there I commanded and the blessed notes obeyed me, and when I had finished, amid a storm of applause, Herr Thielepape arose and ran to me and grasped my hand and declared that he hat never heert de flude accompany itself pefore! I played once more during the evening: and ended with even more rapturous bravos than before. Mr. Scheidemantel grasping my hand this time and thanking me very earnestly.

My heart, which was hurt greatly when I went in to the music-room, came forth from the holy bath of Concords greatly refreshed, strengthened and quieted, and so remaineth today. I also feel better today than in a long time before. Moreover I am still master of the flute, and she hath given forth to me today such tones as I have never heard from a flute before.

For these things, I humbly thank God!

I had yesterday two papers sent by thy father, wh. were very acceptable, and for which I beg thee to thank him very heartily. No letter is yet come from my father.

I will not write thee further today. Thou art my dear Sweet, and I am thy faithful humble

LOVER.

TO HIS FATHER

BALTIMORE, MD. Nov 29th 1873.

MY DEAR FATHER:

I have given your last letter the fullest and most careful consideration. After doing so: I

* The selections from Lanier's *Letters* and *Poems* are used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons. The text of the letters and poems, however, is taken from the Centennial Edition of *The Writings of Sidney Lanier*, with the permission of the publishers, The Johns Hopkins Press, and the General Editor, Charles R. Anderson.

feel sure that Macon is not the place for me. If you could taste the delicious crystalline air and the champagne breeze that I've just been rushing about in,—I am equally sure that, in point of climate, you would agree with me that my chance for life is ten times as great here, as in Macon.

Then, as to business. Why should I,—nay, how *can* I,—settle myself down to be a third-rate struggling lawyer for the balance of my little life,—as long as there is a certainty, almost absolute, that I can do some other things so much better? Several persons, from whose judgment in such matters there can be no appeal, have told me, for instance, that I am the greatest flute-player in the world: and several others, of equally authoritative judgment, have given me almost equal encouragement to work with my pen. (Of course, I protest against the necessity which makes me write such things, about myself:—I only do so, because I so appreciate the love and tenderness which prompt you to desire me with you, that I will make the fullest explanation possible of my course, out of reciprocal honor and respect for the motives which lead you to think differently from me.) My dear father, think how, for twenty years, through poverty, through pain, through weariness, through sickness, through the uncongenial atmospheres of a farcical college and of a bare army and then of an exacting business-life, through all the discouragements of being born on the wrong side of Mason-and-Dickson's line and of being wholly unacquainted with literary people and literary ways,—I say, think how, in spite of all these depressing circumstances and of a thousand more wh. I could enumerate, these two figures of music and of poetry have steadily kept in my heart, so that I could not banish them! Does it not seem to you, as to me, that I begin to have the right to enroll myself among the devotees of these two sublime arts, after having followed them so long and so humbly and through so much bitterness? If I could only make you see all this, as clearly as I *now* feel it, now when I have actually engaged in this service!

The object of my visit to New York was to see at once, by using the severest tests,—that is, by measuring strength with the best artists there—whether there was any hope for me to excel greatly, either as musician or writer; and secondly, to arrange matters so that in case the

Baltimore project failed, I could get some engagement in New York, immediately.

The Baltimore Orchestra is now *un fait accompli*, and having been offered, entirely without solicitation either by myself or my friends, the place of First Flute in it, I have accepted it. Mary will tell you the details of the engagement, wh. I have written her. It is the very best place I cd. have found, just at present, occupying but little time, and thus giving me a splendid opportunity to write and study. As for the climate, I have no fears whatever. It is better than that of New York: and I have continued to prosper, physically, even in the New York climate. In spite of a wretched cold, such as would have laid me up for months at Macon, my appetite has continued good, my strength has constantly increased, and the old dyspepsias that used to drag me down are wholly unknown. I am full of energy, full of unwritten music, full of unrhymed poetry, and I look forward to a winter crowded with vigorous work and profitable study.

TO HIS WIFE

BALTIMORE, Dec. 2nd, 1873

Well, Flauto Primo hath been to his first rehearsal.

Fancy thy poor lover, weary, worn, and stuffed with a cold, arriving after a brisk walk,—he was so afraid he might be behind time—at the hall of Peabody Institute. He passeth down betwixt the empty benches, turneth through the green-room, emergeth on the stage, greeteth the Maestro,¹ is introduced by the same to Flauto Secondo; and then, with as much carelessness as he can assume, he sauntereth in among the rows of music-stands, to see if peradventure he can find the place where he is to sit,—for he knoweth not, and liketh not to ask. He remembereth where the flutes sit in Thomas' Orchestra: but on going to the corresponding spot he findeth the part of Contra Basso on the music-stand,—and fleeth therefrom in terror. In despair he is about to endeavor to get some information on the sly,—when he seeth the good Flauto Secondo sitting down far in front,—and straightway marcheth to his place on the left of the same, with the

¹ Asger Hamerik was Conductor of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. For his high tribute to Lanier as a musician, see Mrs. Lanier's edition of the *Poems*, pp. xxi-xxii.

air of one that had played there since babyhood. This Hamerik of ours hath French ideas about his orchestral arrangements and placeth his pieces very differently from Thomas. —Well, I sit down: some late comers arrive, stamping and blowing,—for it is snowing outside—and pull the green baize covers off their big horns and bass-fiddles. Presently the Maestro, who is rushing about hither and thither, in a Frenchy excitement—falleth to striking a great tuning-fork with a mallet, and straightway we all begin to toot A, to puff it, to groan it, to squeak it, to scrape it, until I sympathize with the poor letter and glide off in some delicate little runs: and presently the others begin to flourish also, and here we have it, up chromatics, down diatonics, unearthly buzzings from the big fiddles, diabolical four-string chords from the cellos, passionate shrieks from the clarionets and oboes, manly remonstrances from the horns, querulous complaints from the bassoons, and so on. Now the Maestro mounteth to his perch. I am seated immediately next the audience, facing the first violins, who are separated from me by the conductor's stand. I place my part, (of the 5th Symphony of Beethoven, which I had procured two days before, in order to look over it,—being told that on the first rehearsal we would try nothing else except the 5th Symphony) on my stand, and try to stop my heart from beating so fast,—with unavailing arguments. Maestro rappeth with his *baton*, and magically stilleth all the shrieks and agonies of the instruments. "Fierst," (he saith, with the Frenchiest of French accents,—tho' a Dane, he was educated in Paris) "I wish to present to ze gentlemen of ze orchestra, our fierst flutist, Mr. Sidney Lanier,—also our first oboe, Mr. (I didn't catch his name)." Whereupon, not knowing what else to do,—and the pause being somewhat awkward—I rise and make a profound bow to the Reeds, who sit behind me, another to the Celli, the Bassi, and Tympani, in the middle, and a third to the Violins opposite. This appeareth to be the right thing, for Oboe jumpeth up also, and boweth, and the gentlemen of the orchestra all rise and bow, some of them with great *empressement*.² Then there is a little idiotic hum and simper, such as newly introduced people usually affect. Then cometh a man,—whom I should always hate, if I *cd.* hate anybody always—and, to my

² Eagerness.

horror putteth on my music-stand the flauto primo part of Niels Gade's³ Ossian Overture: and thereupon the Maestro saith we will try *that* fierst: horrors! They told me they wouldn't play anything but the 5th Symphony: and this Ossian Overture I have never seen or heard!—This did not help my heart-beats, nor steady my lips,—thou canst believe! However, there is no time to tarry, the baton rappeth, the horns blow, my 5 bars rest is out.—I plunge.

—O my Heart, O my Twin, if thou cdst. but be by me in this sublime glory of music! All through it I yearned for thee, with heart-breaking eagerness. The beauty of it maketh me catch my breath,—to write it. I will not attempt to describe it. It is the spirit of the Poems of Ossian, done in music, by the wonderful Niels Gade.

I got through it without causing any disturbance. Maestro had to stop several times on account of some other players. I failed to come in in time twice in the Symphony. I am too tired, now, to give thee any further account. I go again to rehearsal tomorrow.

—I sent thee a letter containing check for \$50 on Sunday. Also sent \$175 to Dr. Dunwoody, desiring to know how much more was needed. I am so eager to have some word from thee: all I know is that thou wert in Atlanta on the 21st. That is eleven days ago!

—Thou Heartsease, thou Tuberose, thou Heliotrope, God have a care upon thy blossoming,—prayeth

THY LOVER.

LIFE AND SONG

(1868; 1868)

Aubrey H. Starke writes of this poem: "One thinks of Milton's splendid sentence 'that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem.'"

If life were caught by a clarionet,
And a wild heart, throbbing in the reed,
Should thrill its joy and trill its fret,
And utter its heart in every deed,

Then would this breathing clarionet
Type what the poet fain would be;

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

For none o' the singers ever yet
Has wholly lived his minstrelsy,

Or clearly sung his true, true thought,
Or utterly bodied forth his life,
Or out of Life and Song has wrought
The perfect one of man and wife;

Or lived and sung, that Life and Song
Might each express the other's all,
Careless if life or art were long
Since both were one, to stand or fall:

So that the wonder struck the crowd,
Who shouted it about the land:
His song was only living aloud,
His work, a singing with his hand!

SONG FOR "THE JACQUERIE" (1868?)

"The Jacquerie" is an unfinished poem dealing with the revolt of the peasants of northern France in 1357. The narrative was to be a protest against the spirit of commercialism. Compare "The Symphony" and the following passage from a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne, April 17, 1872: "You know what the commercial spirit is: you remember that Trade killed Chivalry and now sits in the throne. It was Trade that hatched the Jacquerie in the 14th century: it was Trade that hatched John Brown, and broke the saintly heart of Robert Lee, in the 19th." The hound in the song given below was probably intended to symbolize the hungry, revolting peasants.

The hound was cuffed, the hound was kicked,
O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was nicked,
(*All.*) *Oo-hoo-o*, howled the hound.

The hound into his kennel crept;
He rarely wept, he never slept.
His mouth he always open kept

Licking his bitter wound,
The hound,
(*All.*) *U-lu-lo*, howled the hound.

A star upon his kennel shone
That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.
(*All.*) O hungry was the hound!
The hound had but a churlish wit.
He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit,

"An thou were Master, I had slit
Thy throat with a huge wound,"
Quo' hound.
(*All.*) O, angry was the hound.

5 The star in castle-window shone,
The Master lay abed, alone.

(*All.*) Oh, ho, why not? quo' hound.
He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore
The Master's head from neck, to floor,

10 And rolled the head i' the kennel door,
And fled and saved his wound,
Good hound!

(*All.*) *U-lu-lo*, howled the hound.

15

20

THE SYMPHONY (1875; 1875)

On March 24, 1875, Lanier wrote to Gibson Peacock: "About four days ago, a certain poem which I had vaguely ruminated a week before took hold of me like a real James River ague, and I have been in a mortal shake with the same, day and night, ever since. I call it 'The Symphony': I personify each instrument in the orchestra, and make them discuss various deep social questions of the times, in the progress of the music. It is now nearly finished; and I shall be rejoiced thereat, for it verily racks all the bones of my spirit." The poem was published in *Lippincott's Magazine* for June, 1875.

25 The theme of the poem is that of the unfinished "The Jacquerie": the evil effects of commercialism, which was the most striking characteristic of the "gilded age." "The Trade of the poem," says Aubrey H. Starke, "is modern capitalism, which prevents harmony in national life." In a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne, April 17, 1872, Lanier had written:

40 "Trade, Trade, Trade: pah, are we not all sick? A man cannot walk down a green alley of woods, in these days, without unawares getting his mouth and nose and eyes covered with some web or other that Trade has stretched across, to catch some gain or other. 'T is an old spider that has crawled all over our modern life, and covered it with a flimsy web that conceals the Realities. Our religion, our politics, our social life, our charities, our literature, nay, by Heavens!, our music and our loves almost, are all meshed in unsubstantial concealments and filthy garnitures by it."

45

50

Note also the following passage in a letter to Mrs. Lanier, March 12, 1875:

"I have so many fair dreams and hopes about music in these days. It is a gospel whereof the people are in great need. As Christ gathered up the ten commandments and re-distilled them into the clear liquid of that wondrous eleventh—Love God utterly, and thy neighbor as thyself—so I think the time will come when music, rightly developed to its now-little-foreseen grandeur, will be found to be a later revelation of all gospels in one."

In its adaptations of sound to sense, the poem deserves comparison with Poe's "The Bells" and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." See the admirable discussion of the poem in Aubrey H. Starke, *Sidney Lanier*, pp. 201-211.

"O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The Time needs heart—'tis tired of head:
We're all for love," the violins said.
"Of what avail the rigorous tale
Of bill for coin and box for bale?
Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devils grope:
When all's done, what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun?
Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh
Of true love's least, least ecstasy?"
Then, with a bridegroom's heart-beats trembling,
All the mightier strings assembling
Ranged them on the violins' side
As when the bridegroom leads the bride,
And, heart in voice, together cried:
"Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land,
The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedge'd by the pressing of Trade's hand
Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens evermore:
They sigh a monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside leagues of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.
'Each day, all day' (these poor folks say),
'In the same old year-long, drear-long way,
We weave in the mills and heave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thief much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?—
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;

And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?
Swinehood hath no remedy
Say many men, and hasten by,
5 Clamping the nose and blinking the eye.
But who said once, in the lordly tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone
But all that cometh from the Throne?
Hath God said so?
10 But Trade saith No:
And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills say *Go!*
There's plenty that can, if you can't: we know.
Move out, if you think you're underpaid.
The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;
15 *Trade is trade.'*"
Thereat this passionate protesting
Meekly changed, and softened till
It sank to sad requesting
And suggesting sadder still:
20 "And oh, if men might some time see
How piteous-false the poor decree
That trade no more than trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I?*
Then 'Trade is trade' but sings a lie:
25 'Tis only war grown miserly.
If business is battle, name it so:
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And widows less will blame it so.
Alas, for the poor to have some part
30 In yon sweet living lands of Art,
Makes problem not for head, but heart.
Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it."

35 And then, as when from words that seem but
rude
We pass to silent pain that sits abroad
Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,
So sank the strings to gentle throbbing
40 Of long chords change-marked with sobbing—
Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard
Then half wing-openings of the sleeping bird,
Some dream of danger to her young hath stirred.

45 Then stirring and demurring ceased, and lo!
Every least ripple of the strings' song-flow
Died to a level with each level bow
And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced so,
As a brook beneath his curving bank doth go
50 To linger in the sacred dark and green
Where many boughs the still pool overlean
And many leaves make shadow with their sheen.

But presently
 A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly
 Upon the bosom of that harmony,
 And sailed and sailed incessantly,
 As if a petal from a wild-rose blown
 Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone
 And boatwise dropped o' the convex side
 And floated down the glassy tide
 And clarified and glorified
 The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.
 From the warm concave of that fluted note
 Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did float,
 As if a rose might somehow be a throat:
 "When Nature from her far-off glen
 Flutes her soft messages to men,
 The flute can say them o'er again;
 Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,
 Breathes through life's strident polyphone
 The flute-voice in the world of tone.
 Sweet friends,
 Man's love ascends
 To finer and diviner ends
 Than man's mere thought e'er comprehends,
 For I, e'en I,
 As here I lie,
 A petal on a harmony,
 Demand of Science whence and why
 Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,
 When he doth gaze on earth and sky?
 I am not overbold:
 I hold
 Full powers from Nature manifold.
 I speak for each no-tongued tree
 That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
 And dumbly and most wistfully
 His mighty prayerful arms outspreads
 Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
 And his big blessing downward sheds.
 I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,
 Lichens on stones and moss on eaves,
 Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;
 Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,
 And briery mazes bounding lanes,
 And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,
 And milky stems and sugary veins;
 For every long-armed woman-vine
 That round a piteous tree doth twine;
 For passionate odors, and divine
 Pistils, and petals crystalline;
 All purities of shady springs,
 All shynesses of film-winged things
 That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;

All modesties of mountain-fawns
 That leap to covert from wild lawns,
 And tremble if the day but dawns;
 All sparklings of small beady eyes
 5 Of birds, and sidelong glances wise
 Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;
 All piquancies of prickly burs,
 And smoothnesses of downs and furs,
 Of eiders and of minevers;
 10 All limpid honeys that do lie
 At stamen-bases, nor deny
 The humming-birds' fine roguery,
 Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;
 All gracious curves of slender wings,
 15 Bark-mottlings, fibre-spiralings,
 Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;
 Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell
 Wherewith in every lonesome dell
 Time to himself his hours doth tell;
 20 All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,
 Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,
 And night's unearthly under-tones;
 All placid lakes and waveless deeps,
 All cool reposing mountain-steeps,
 25 Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps;—
 Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,
 And warmths, and mysteries, and mights,
 Of Nature's utmost depths and heights.
 —These doth my timid tongue present,
 30 Their mouthpiece and leal instrument
 And servant, all love-eloquent.
 I heard, when '*All for love*' the violins cried:
 So, Nature calls through all her system wide,
Give me thy love, O man, so long denied.
 35 Much time is run, and man hath changed his
 ways,
 Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,
 Was hid from man's true love by proxy fays,
 False fauns and rascal gods that stole her praise.
 40 The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder
 brain,
 Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm heart
 was fain
 Never to lave its love in them again.
 45 Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said,
 Then first the bounds of neighborhood out-
 spread
 Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread.
 Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant head:
 50 '*All men are neighbors,*' so the sweet Voice said.
 So, when man's arms had circled all man's race,
 The liberal compass of his warm embrace

Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of space;
With hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's
grace,

Drew her to breast and kissed her sweetheart
face:

Yea, man found neighbors in great hills and trees
And streams and clouds and suns and birds and
bees,

And throbbed with neighbor-loves in loving
these.

But oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
That stand by the inward-opening door
Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
And sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside hills of liberty,
Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
For Art to make into melody!

Thou Trade! thou king of the modern days!

Change thy ways,

Change thy ways;

Let the sweaty laborers file

A little while,

A little while,

Where Art and Nature sing and smile.

Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?

And hast thou nothing but a head?

I'm all for heart," the flute-voice said,

And into sudden silence fled,

Like as a blush that while 'tis red

Dies to a still, still white instead.

Thereto a thrilling calm succeeds,
Till presently the silence breeds
A little breeze among the reeds
That seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:

Then from the gentle stir and fret

Sings out the melting clarionet,

Like as a lady sings while yet

Her eyes with salty tears are wet.

"O Trade! O Trade!" the Lady said,

"I too will wish thee utterly dead

If all thy heart is in thy head.

For O my God! and O my God!

What shameful ways have women trod

At beckoning of Trade's golden rod!

Alas when sighs are traders' lies,

And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes

Are merchandise!

O purchased lips that kiss with pain!

O cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and stain!

O trafficked hearts that break in twain!

—And yet what wonder at my sisters' crime?

So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy prime,
Men love not women as in olden time.

Ah, not in these cold merchantable days

Deem men their life an opal gray, where plays

5 The one red Sweet of gracious ladies'-praise.

Now, comes a suitor with sharp prying eye—

Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*

Come, heart for heart—a trade? What! weeping?
why?

10 Shame on such wooers' dapper mercery!

I would my lover kneeling at my feet

In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*

I know not if thy heart my heart will greet:

I ask not if thy love my love can meet:

15 *Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall say,*

I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:

I do but know I love thee, and I pray

To be thy knight until my dying day.

Woe him that cunning trades in hearts contrives!

20 Base love good women to base loving drives.

If men loved larger, larger were our lives;

And wooed they nobler, won they nobler wives."

There thrust the bold straightforward horn

25 To battle for that lady lorn,

With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,

Like any knight in knighthood's morn.

"Now comfort thee," said he,

"Fair Lady.

30 For God shall right thy grievous wrong,

And man shall sing thee a true-love song,

Voiced in act his whole life long,

Yea, all thy sweet life long,

Fair Lady.

35 Where's he that craftily hath said,

The day of chivalry is dead?

I'll prove that lie upon his head,

Or I will die instead,

Fair Lady.

40 Is Honor gone into his grave?

Hath Faith become a caitiff knave,

And Selfhood turned into a slave

To work in Mammon's cave,

Fair Lady?

45 Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?

Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain

All great contempts of mean-got gain

And hates of inward stain,

Fair Lady?

50 For aye shall name and fame be sold,

And place be hugged for the sake of gold,

And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold

At Crime all money-bold,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget
 Kiss-pardons for the daily fret
 Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet—
 Blind to lips kiss-wise set—
 Fair Lady?
 Shall lovers higgie, heart for heart,
 Till wooing grows a trading mart
 Where much for little, and all for part,
 Make love a cheapening art,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall woman scorch for a single sin
 That her betrayer may revel in,
 And she be burnt, and he but grin
 When that the flames begin,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
We maids would far, far whiter be
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches
 With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes—
 The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes
 For Christ's and ladies' sakes,
 Fair Lady?
 Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed
 To fight like a man and love like a maid,
 Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's blade,
 I' the scabbard, death, was laid,
 Fair Lady,
 I dare avouch my faith is bright
 That God doth right and God hath might.
 Nor time hath changed His hair to white,
 Nor His dear love to spite,
 Fair Lady.
 I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my clay,
 And fight my fight in the patient modern way
 For true love and for thee—ah me! and pray
 To be thy knight until my dying day,
 Fair Lady.”
 Made end that knightly horn, and spurred away
 Into the thick of the melodious fray.

And then the hautboy played and smiled,
 And sang like any large-eyed child,
 Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
 “Huge Trade!” he said,
 “Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head
 And run where'er my finger led!
 Once said a Man—and wise was He—

*Never shalt thou the heavens see,
 Save as a little child thou be.”*
 Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling tunes
 The ancient wise bassoons,
 5 Like weird,
 Gray-beard
 Old harpers sitting on the high sea-dunes,
 Chanted runes:
 “Bright-waved gain, gray-waved loss,
 10 The sea of all doth lash and toss,
 One wave forward and one across:
 But now 'twas trough, now 'tis crest,
 And worst doth foam and flash to best,
 And curst to blest.

15 “Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to
 west,
 Love, Love alone can pore
 On thy dissolving score
 20 Of harsh half-phrasings,
 Blotted ere writ,
 And double erasings
 Of chords most fit.
 Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,
 25 May read thy weltering palimpsest.
 To follow Time's dying melodies through,
 And never to lose the old in the new,
 And ever to solve the discords true—
 Love alone can do.

30 And ever Love hears the poor-folks' crying,
 And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
 And ever sweet knighthood's death-defying,
 And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
 But never a trader's glozing and lying.

35 “And yet shall Love himself be heard,
 Though long deferred, though long deferred:
 O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:
 Music is Love in search of a word.”¹

40 ¹ “And so, in praise of love, which is music, and
 music, which is love—and both revelations of God,
 ‘The Symphony ends. The final definition is a
 spiritual gloss on Mme. De Staël's famous definition,
 which Lanier had read as a youth: ‘Music is love's
 only interpreter’; but it is religious as well. It recalls
 Lanier's assertion, made nine years earlier, that
 45 ‘Music . . . is utterly unconscious of aught but Love.’
 It recalls, too, the declaration of Felix Sterling, in
Tiger-Lilies, that ‘Music means harmony, harmony
 means love, and love means—God!’ This is the core
 of Lanier's philosophy, and ‘The Symphony,’ though
 50 certainly not the most effective nor the most beautiful
 of Lanier's poems, is, for the revelation it makes of
 his philosophy, without doubt the most significant”
 (Aubrey H. Starke, *Sidney Lanier*, p. 209).

THE STIRRUP-CUP

(1877; 1877)

Death, thou 'rt a cordial old and rare:
 Look how compounded, with what care!
 Time got his wrinkles reaping thee
 Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,
 Keats, and Gotama¹ excellent,
 Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,
 And Shakspeare for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:
 Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;
 'Tis thy rich stirrup-cup to me;
 I'll drink it down right smilingly.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

(1877)

The date of composition and the date of first publication are not definitely established. (See Aubrey H. Starke, *Sidney Lanier*, pp. 290-291). The Chattahoochee River rises in northeastern Georgia, flows through Hall County, on by Columbus, and into the Gulf at Apalachicola, Florida. This is the most popular of Lanier's poems, but hardly his best. In music and tone-color it rivals Tennyson's "The Brook" and surpasses Southey's "The Cataract of Lodore"; but the employment of the law of gravitation as a symbol of duty seems inappropriate.

Out of the hills of Habersham,
 Down the valleys of Hall,
 I hurry amain to reach the plain,
 Run the rapid and leap the fall,
 Split at the rock and together again,
 Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
 And flee from folly on every side
 With a lover's pain to attain the plain
 Far from the hills of Habersham,
 Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
 All through the valleys of Hall,
 The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,
 The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
 5 The laving laurel turned my tide,
 The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,
 The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
 And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
 10 *Here in the valleys of Hall*.
 High o'er the hills of Habersham,
 Veiling the valleys of Hall,
 The hickory told me manifold
 15 Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
 Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
 The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
 Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
 Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
 20 *Deep shades of the hills of Habersham*,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
 And oft in the valleys of Hall,
 25 The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-
 stone
 Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
 And many a luminous jewel lone
 —Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
 30 Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
 Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
 In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
 In the beds of the valleys of Hall.
 35 But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
 And oh, not the valleys of Hall
 Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
 Downward the voices of Duty call—
 Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
 40 The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
 And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
 And the lordly main from beyond the plain
 Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
 Calls through the valleys of Hall.

THE REVENGE OF HAMISH

(1878; 1878)

The plot of Lanier's ballad is taken from a popular novel of the time, William Black's *Mac-leod of Dare*, Chapter III. In objectivity and impersonality if not in diction the poem recalls the best of the British popular ballads. As a revenge story, it is worthy of comparison with

¹ Buddha.

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." In his last letter to Bayard Taylor, October 20, 1878, Lanier writes: "If you should see an Appleton's Journal for the current month—November—you may be interested in an experiment of mine therein with logædic dactyls called 'The Revenge of Hamish.' Another freer treatment of the same rhythm will appear . . . under the heading 'The Marshes of Glynn:' . . ." *Logædic* implies freedom of treatment or irregularity. Lanier, who had hitherto used chiefly the iambic meter, was now experimenting with the freer rhythms he was to use successfully in "The Marshes of Glynn" and "Sunrise."

It was three slim does and a ten-tined buck in the bracken lay;
And all of a sudden the sinister smell of a man,
Awaft on a wind-shift, wavered and ran
Down the hill-side and sifted along through the bracken and passed that way.

5

Then Nan got a-tremble at nostril; she was the dantiest doe;
In the print of her velvet flank on the velvet fern
She reared, and rounded her ears in turn.
Then the buck leapt up, and his head as a king's to a crown did go

10

Full high in the breeze, and he stood as if Death had the form of a deer;
And the two slim does long lazily stretching arose,
For their day-dream slower came to a close,
Till they woke and were still, breath-bound with waiting and wonder and fear.

15

Then Alan the huntsman sprang over the hillock, the hounds shot by,
The does and the ten-tined buck made a marvellous bound,
The hounds swept after with never a sound,
But Alan loud winded his horn in sign that the quarry was nigh.

20

For at dawn of that day proud Maclean of Lochbuy to the hunt had waxed wild,
And he cursed at old Alan till Alan fared off with the hounds
For to drive him the deer to the lower glen-grounds:
"I will kill a red deer," quoth Maclean, "in the sight of the wife and the child."

25

So gayly he paced with the wife and the child to his chosen stand;
But he hurried tall Hamish the henchman ahead: "Go turn,"—
Cried Maclean,—"if the deer seek to cross to the burn,
Do thou turn them to me: nor fail, lest thy back be red as thy hand."

30

Now hard-fortuned Hamish, half blown of his breath with the height of the hill,
Was white in the face when the ten-tined buck and the does
Drew leaping to burn-ward; huskily rose
His shouts, and his nether lip twitched, and his legs were o'er-weak for his will.

35

So the deer darted lightly by Hamish and bounded away to the burn.
But Maclean never bating his watch tarried waiting below;
Still Hamish hung heavy with fear for to go
All the space of an hour; then he went, and his face was greenish and stern,

40

And his eye sat back in the socket, and shrunken the eye-balls shone,
As withdrawn from a vision of deeds it were shame to see.
"Now, now, grim henchman, what is 't with thee?"
Brake Maclean, and his wrath rose red as a beacon the wind hath upblown.

"Three does and a ten-tined buck made out," spoke Hamish, full mild,
 "And I ran for to turn, but my breath it was blown, and they passed;
 I was weak, for ye called ere I broke me my fast."
 Cried Maclean: "Now a ten-tined buck in the sight of the wife and the child

5

I had killed if the gluttonous kern had not wrought me a snail's own wrong!"
 Then he sounded, and down came kinsmen and clansmen all:
 "Ten blows, for ten tine, on his back let fall,
 And reckon no stroke if the blood follow not at the bite of thong!"

10

So Hamish made bare, and took him his strokes; at the last he smiled.
 "Now I'll to the burn," quoth Maclean, "for it still may be,
 If a slimmer-paunched henchman will hurry with me,
 I shall kill me the ten-tined buck for a gift to the wife and the child!"

15

Then the clansmen departed, by this path and that; and over the hill
 Sped Maclean with an outward wrath for an inward shame;
 And that place of the lashing full quiet became;
 And the wife and the child stood sad; and bloody-backed Hamish sat still.

20

But look! red Hamish has risen; quick about and about turns he.
 "There is none betwixt me and the crag-top!" he screams under breath.
 Then, livid as Lazarus lately from death,
 He snatches the child from the mother, and clammers the crag toward the sea.

25

Now the mother drops breath; she is dumb, and her heart goes dead for a space,
 Till the motherhood, mistress of death, shrieks, shrieks through the glen,
 And that place of the lashing is live with men,
 And Maclean, and the gillie that told him, dash up in a desperate race.

30

Not a breath's time for asking; an eye-glance reveals all the tale untold.
 They follow mad Hamish afar up the crag toward the sea,
 And the lady cries: "Clansmen, run for a fee!
 Yon castle and lands to the two first hands that shall hook him and hold

35

Fast Hamish back from the brink!"—and ever she flies up the steep,
 And the clansmen pant, and they sweat, and they jostle and strain.
 But, mother, 'tis vain; but, father, 'tis vain;
 Stern Hamish stands bold on the brink, and dangles the child o'er the deep.

40

Now a faintness falls on the men that run, and they all stand still.
 And the wife prays Hamish as if he were God, on her knees,
 Crying: "Hamish! O Hamish! but please, but please
 For to spare him!" and Hamish still dangles the child, with a wavering will.

45

On a sudden he turns; with a sea-hawk scream, and a gibe, and a song,
 Cries: "So; I will spare ye the child if, in sight of ye all,
 Ten blows on Maclean's bare back shall fall,
 And ye reckon no stroke if the blood follow not at the bite of the thong!"

50

Then Maclean he set hardly his tooth to his lip that his tooth was red,
 Breathed short for a space, said: "Nay, but it shall never be!

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

Let me hurl off the damnable hound in the sea!"
 But the wife: "Can Hamish go fish us the child from the sea, if dead?"

Say yea!—Let them lash *me*, Hamish?"—"Nay"—"Husband, the lashing will heal;
 But, oh, who will heal *me* the bonny sweet bairn in his grave? 5
 Could ye cure me my heart with the death of a knave?
 Quick! Love! I will bare thee—so—kneel!" Then Maclean 'gan slowly to kneel

With never a word, till presently downward he jerked to the earth.
 Then the henchman—he that smote Hamish—would tremble and lag; 10
 "Strike, hard!" quoth Hamish, full stern, from the crag;
 Then he struck him, and "One!" sang Hamish, and danced with the child in his mirth.

And no man spake beside Hamish; he counted each stroke with a song.
 When the last stroke fell, then he moved him a pace down the height, 15
 And he held forth the child in the heartaching sight
 Of the mother, and looked all pitiful grave, as repenting a wrong.

And there as the motherly arms stretched out with the thanksgiving prayer—
 And there as the mother crept up with a fearful swift pace, 20
 Till her finger nigh felt of the bairnie's face—
 In a flash fierce Hamish turned round and lifted the child in the air,

And sprang with the child in his arms from the horrible height in the sea,
 Shrill screeching, "Revenge!" in the wind-rush; and pallid Maclean, 25
 Age-feeble with anger and impotent pain,
 Crawled up on the crag, and lay flat, and locked hold of dead roots of a tree—

And gazed hungrily o'er, and the blood from his back drip-dripped in the brine,
 And a sea-hawk flung down a skeleton fish as he flew, 30
 And the mother stared white on the waste of blue,
 And the wind drove a cloud to seaward, and the sun began to shine.

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

(1878; 1878)

This poem first appeared in *A Masque of Poets*, a volume appearing in the "No Name Series." Lanier called the volume "a distressing, an aggravated, yes, an intolerable collection of mediocrity and mere cleverness." He added: "If these gentlemen and ladies would read the old English poetry—I mean the poetry before Chaucer, from Cædmon in the seventh century to Langland in the fourteenth—they could never be content to put forth these little diffuse prettinesses and dandy kickshaws of verse."

The Marshes of Glynn are situated near Brunswick, Georgia, where Lanier had visited in 1877. Marshes and swamps are more characteristic of the Southern than of the Northern landscape, and Lanier has effectively treated a natural background very different from that commonly described in American poetry. "With Lanier," says Aubrey H. Starke, "nature is humanized. Indeed, since St. Francis, no soul has seemed so heavily overcharged with a feeling of brotherhood for all created things, all natural objects, and all natural phenomena."

- Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
 With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
 Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
 Emerald twilights,—
 5 Virginal shy lights,
 Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
 When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
 Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
 Of the heavenly woods and glades,
 10 That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
 The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—
- Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,—
 Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
 15 Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
 Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
 Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
 Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—
- 20 O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
 While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
 Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
 But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
 And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
 25 And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
 Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—
 Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
 And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
 Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
 30 And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
 And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
 That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn
 Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
 When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
 35 And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
 Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,—
 Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
 The vast sweet visage of space.
 To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
 40 Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
 For a mete and a mark
 To the forest-dark:—
 So:
 Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
 45 Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand
 (Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!),
 Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
 On the firm-packed sand,
 Free
 50 By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
 Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
 Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.

Inward and outward to northward and southward, the beach-lines linger and curl
 As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
 Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
 Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
 And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high? 5
 The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
 A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
 Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
 Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
 To the terminal blue of the main. 10

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
 Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
 From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
 By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn. 15
 Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
 Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
 Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
 Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
 God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain 20
 And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
 Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
 I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies 25
 In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
 By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
 I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
 Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
 The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn. 30

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
 Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
 Look how the grace of the sea doth go
 About and about through the intricate channels that flow 35
 Here and there,
 Everywhere,
 Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes.
 And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
 That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow 40
 In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
 Farewell, my lord Sun!
 The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
 'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
 Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr; 45
 Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
 And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
 The tide is in his ecstasy. 50
 The tide is at his highest height:
 And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
5 Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

MARSH SONG—AT SUNSET

(1880?; 1882)

Over the monstrous shambling sea,
Over the Caliban sea,
Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest:
Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West,—
Thy Prospero I'll be.

Over the humped and fishy sea,
Over the Caliban sea,
O cloud in the West, like a thought in the heart
Of pardon, loose thy wing, and start,
And do a grace for me.

Over the huge and huddling sea,
Over the Caliban sea,
Bring hither my brother Antonio,—Man,—
My injurer: night breaks the ban:
Brother, I pardon thee.

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

(November, 1880)

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
5 But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

10 Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
15 From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.

BRET HARTE

1836 - 1902

It would seem evident, therefore, that the secret of the American short story was the treatment of characteristic American life, with absolute knowledge of its peculiarities and sympathy with its methods; with no fastidious ignoring of its habitual expression, or the inchoate poetry that may be found even hidden in its slang; with no moral determination except that which may be the legitimate outcome of the story itself; with no more elimination than may be necessary for the artistic conception, and never from the fear of the "fetish" of conventionalism.

—BRET HARTE, "The Rise of the 'Short Story,'" *Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1899.

(Francis) Bret Harte was born in Albany, N. Y., on August 25, 1836 (not in 1839, as often stated). Mark Twain was born the year before and Howells the year after. He came of mixed English, Dutch, and Hebrew stock. The paternal grandfather, Bernard Hart, was a Jewish business man, born in England, who in 1799 married a gentile, Catherine Brett. Soon after the birth of a son, Henry Harte (as Henry finally decided to spell the name), the two separated. Henry Harte, a teacher, married Elizabeth Rebecca Ostrander. From the time of Henry Harte's death in 1845 until 1853 Bret lived with his mother in Brooklyn and New York. His schooling was irregular, but he was a precocious child and a great reader. Of the authors he read, Dickens and Irving influenced him most. He left school at thirteen and was supporting himself by the time he was sixteen.

In 1850 his older brother Henry went to live in California. His mother went there in 1853. Harte and a sister followed in 1854, taking the Nicaragua route rather than the overland trail followed by the covered wagons. The next three years are obscure; he may have taught school at this time. Although Harte saw much of California life and did many things before he became famous with "The Luck of Roaring Camp" in 1868, it is not certain that he had any real experience as a miner. He worked for a time at Union on the *Northern Californian* as compositor and junior editor. While his chief was away, Harte published a passionate denunciation of the men who had massacred some harmless Indians. A committee of pioneers, such as that which waited upon Oakhurst the gambler in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," probably ordered him to leave town. At any rate, Harte left Union in 1860 for San Francisco.

He first became type-setter and later contributor to the *Golden Era*, a weekly magazine. In this and the *Californian*, founded in 1864, Harte published many of his early writings: poems, sketches, book reviews, etc. He was learning to write. The burlesques which he collected under the title, *Condensed Novels*, indicate a keen feeling for style. Two helpful advisors were Starr

King, a Unitarian minister, and Mrs. John C. Frémont, the daughter of Senator Benton of Missouri. In October, 1862, the *Atlantic Monthly* published his Irvingesque "The Legend of Monte del Diablo." In 1867 he published *The Lost Galleon and Other Poems and Condensed Novels*. San Francisco was now a literary center of some importance. Harte and Mark Twain are the best-known writers of the group, but there were a number of others who are little known away from the Pacific Coast. They shared the sectional pride of young California and determined to add the new state to the American literary map. Years later Harte spoke of certain early poems and stories as

"his first efforts toward indicating a peculiarly characteristic Western American literature. He would like to offer these facts as evidence of his very early, half-boyish, but very enthusiastic belief in such a possibility,—a belief which never deserted him, and which, a few years later, from the better-known pages of the 'Overland Monthly,' he was able to demonstrate to a larger and more cosmopolitan audience in the story of *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, and the poem of the *Heathen Chinees*."

Harte became the first editor of a new California magazine, the *Overland Monthly*, which issued its first number in July, 1868. In the manuscripts that came to him he failed to discover "anything of that wild and picturesque life which had impressed him, first as a truant school-boy, and afterwards as a youthful schoolmaster among the mining population." He determined to make good the deficiency himself. Abandoning his earlier satiric attitude toward the miners, he wrote "The Luck of Roaring Camp," which appeared in the August number. A young woman who read proof on the *Overland* was so shocked by the profanity and the character of the baby's mother that she protested against the publication of the story. Eleven years later Harte wrote to his wife (he had married Anna Griswold in 1862): "Do you remember the day you lay sick at San José and I read you the story of 'The Luck,' and took heart and comfort from your tears over it, and courage to go on and *demand* that it should be put into the magazine?" A young woman in Boston, assistant to James T. Fields, the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, brought "The Luck" to Fields's attention. The result was a request on the part of the *Atlantic* for a similar story. The *Overland Monthly* for January, 1869, contained "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." In 1870 Harte brought out the volume, *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches*. In September, 1870, he published in the *Overland* "Plain Language from Truthful James," better known as "The Heathen Chinees," which was widely copied. Harte had thought so little of the poem that he had offered it to Ambrose Bierce for the *News-Letter*, but Bierce recognized its value and insisted that Harte should print it in the *Overland*. According to Mark Twain, who was somewhat ashamed of his own story of the jumping frog, Harte "said that the *Heathen Chinees* was an accident, and that he had higher literary ambitions than the fame that could come from an extravaganza of that sort."

In February, 1871, Harte with his family left California, never to return. The regents of the new state university at Berkeley had offered him a salary of three hundred dollars a month to serve as Professor of Recent Literature and Curator of the Library and Museum, but Harte was after bigger game. Chicago wished to make him editor of the *Lakeside Monthly*, but nothing came of it because Harte did not show up at the dinner planned for him. In Cambridge, Howells entertained him for a week. (See the chapter on Harte in the later editions of Howells's *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*.) Those who expected to find in Harte a burly miner in

flannel shirt and top boots were surprised to see a polished gentleman of medium height, immaculately dressed. Literary Boston received him with attention and hospitality such as it never showed Mark Twain. The *Atlantic Monthly* offered him the then unprecedented sum of ten thousand dollars for whatever he might write for it during the year beginning March 1, 1871.

Harte's great vogue, however, began quickly to wane. He tried lecturing, which he disliked. He tried novel-writing, but his *Gabriel Conroy*, though published serially in *Scribner's Monthly*, was no great success. He wrote a play, *Ah Sin*, in collaboration with Mark Twain, but it was a failure. Before 1878, when President Hayes appointed him as Commercial Agent at Crefeld in Prussia, Harte was almost at his wit's end. He sailed in June of that year, never to return to America. In less than two years he was transferred to a more lucrative consular position at Glasgow in Scotland at a salary of three thousand dollars. When five years later he lost his position, he settled down in London. He liked England in many ways, but the main reason why he remained there was that he could support himself by his stories there and he had not been able to do so in the United States. His letters indicate that he worked hard to support his rather extravagant family, which had remained behind in America. He died on May 5, 1902. For years he had suffered from cancer of the throat.

In attempting to estimate Bret Harte's importance, one should distinguish between the historical and the intrinsic value of his work. His influence upon the short story and upon the literary treatment of the West has been tremendous. Today, however, he is remembered as the author of not more than two or three poems and perhaps four or five short stories—this in spite of the fairly consistently high level of his workmanship. Perhaps his greatest shortcoming—which is that of most modern writers of fiction—is his inability to create great characters. And yet some of his characters are in a way memorable: Oakhurst, Jack Hamlin, Colonel Starbottle, Tennessee's partner, and others. Californians long questioned the accuracy of his picture of the miners. Josiah Royce condemned "the perverse romanticism" of Harte's stories.

More than most of his literary contemporaries, Harte had that best claim to remembrance—a style. One of his old California friends, Charles Warren Stoddard, has illustrated Harte's care in composition:

"One day I found him pacing the floor of his office in the United States Mint; he was knitting his brows and staring at vacancy,—I wondered why. He was watching and waiting for a word, the right word, the one word of all others to fit into a line of recently written prose. I suggested one; it would not answer; it must be a word of two syllables, or the natural rhythm of the sentence would suffer. Thus he perfected his prose."

There are earlier lives by T. E. Pemberton and H. C. Merwin, but the best life is George R. Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte, Argonaut and Exile* (1931). Professor Stewart published in 1933 *A Bibliography of the Writings of Bret Harte in the Magazines and Newspapers of California, 1857-1871*. For criticism see John Erskine, *Leading American Novelists* (1911) and Fred Lewis Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870* (1915), Chapter IV. Geoffrey Bret Harte's *The Letters of Bret Harte* (1926) throws much light on Harte's life after he left California, but the letters written before 1871 are few and slight. Joseph B. Harrison's *Bret Harte: Representative Selections* (1941) has a good bibliography. For the background, see Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (1939). Other materials are listed in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

(1868)

Harte tells how the story was first published:

"... in looking over his materials on preparing the first number [of the *Overland Monthly*], he was discouraged to find the same notable lack of characteristic fiction. There were good literary articles, sketches of foreign travel, and some essays in description of the natural resources of California,—excellent from a commercial and advertising viewpoint. But he failed to discover anything of that wild and picturesque life which had impressed him, first as a truant schoolboy, and afterwards as a youthful school-master among the mining population. In his perplexity he determined to attempt to make good the deficiency himself. He wrote 'The Luck of Roaring Camp.' . . . The publication of the story was objected to by both printer and publisher, virtually for not being in the conventional line of subject, treatment, and morals! The introduction of the abandoned outcast mother of the foundling 'Luck,' and the language used by the characters, received a serious warning and protest. The writer was obliged to use his right as editor to save his unfortunate contribution from oblivion."

There was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—"*Cherokee Sal*."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministrations of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin that, at a moment when she most

lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of her spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen also that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the

summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it"; even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry,—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder; but in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men, who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen,"

said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency,—“gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy.” The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so unconsciously set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in comments were audible,—criticisms addressed perhaps rather to Stumpy in the character of showman: “Is that him?” “Mighty small specimen”; “Hasn’t more’n got the color”; “Ain’t bigger nor a derringer.” The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco box; a double-bloom; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady’s handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with a remark from the giver that he “saw that pin and went two diamonds better”) a slung-shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver’s); a pair of surgeon’s shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. “The d—d little cuss!” he said, as he extricated his finger, with perhaps more tenderness and care than he held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. “He rasted with my finger,” he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, “the d—d little cuss!”

It was four o’clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely,

and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the newcomer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood-tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Halfway down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene!" replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing!" There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprang up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog,—a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp, as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety,—the first symptom of the

camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got,—lace, you know, and fligree-work and frills,—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills,—that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating,—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "The Kid," "Stumpy's Boy," "The Coyote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "The d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all around. Call him Luck, and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the

greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the Church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly eying the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't goin' to understand. And ef there's goin' to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been otherwise uttered than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and white-washed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle, packed eighty miles by mule, had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how 'The Luck' got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and in self-defense the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon

those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding The Luck. It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling, which had gained the camp its infelicitous title, were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquilizing quality; and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor from her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-oo-o-ard of the Arethusa." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song,—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end,—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches

below. Latterly there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for The Luck. It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be serenely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral,"—a hedge of tessellated pine boughs, which surrounded his bed,—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a-talking to a jaybird as was a-sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin' at each other just like two cherry-bums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and play-fellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gum; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumblebees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times," and the luck

was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly preëmpted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've got a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Injin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of The Luck, who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely skeptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous water-course that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and débris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy, nearest the river-bank, was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the

hope, the joy, The Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying!" he repeated; "he's a-taking me with him. Tell the boys I've got The Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(TABLE MOUNTAIN, 1870)

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;

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But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
5 In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.
10 But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
15 Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
20 And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

25 In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
30 In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
35 Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapes,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
40 And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

45

MRS. JUDGE JENKINS

(1871)

(BEING THE ONLY GENUINE SEQUEL TO
"MAUD MULLER")
50 Maud Muller all that summer day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay;

Yet, looking down the distant lane,
She hoped the Judge would come again.

But when he came, with smile and bow,
Maud only blushed, and stammered, "Ha-ow?" 5

And spoke of her "pa," and wondered whether
He'd give consent they should wed together.

Old Muller burst in tears, and then 10
Begged that the Judge would lend him "ten";

For trade was dull, and wages low,
And the "craps," this year, were somewhat slow.

And ere the languid summer died,
Sweet Maud became the Judge's bride.

But on the day that they were mated,
Maud's brother Bob was intoxicated; 20

And Maud's relations, twelve in all,
Were very drunk at the Judge's hall.

And when the summer came again, 25
The young bride bore him babies twain;

And the Judge was blest, but thought it strange
That bearing children made such a change;

For Maud grew broad and red and stout, 30
And the waist that his arm once clasped about

Was more than he now could span; and he
Sighed as he pondered, ruefully, 35

How that which in Maud was native grace
In Mrs. Jenkins was out of place;

And thought of the twins, and wished that
they
Looked less like the men who raked the
hay

On Muller's farm, and dreamed with pain 10
Of the day he wandered down the lane.

And looking down that dreary track,
He half regretted that he came back;

15 For, had he waited, he might have wed
Some maiden fair and thoroughbred;

For there be women fair as she,
Whose verbs and nouns do more agree.

20 Alas for maiden! alas for judge!
And the sentimental,—that's one-half "fudge";

For Maud soon thought the Judge a bore, 25
With all his learning and all his lore;

And the Judge would have bartered Maud's fair
face
For more refinement and social grace.

30 If, of all words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are, "It might have been,"

More sad are these we daily see:
35 "It is, but hadn't ought to be."

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, “MARK TWAIN”

1835 - 1910

Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes—I knew them all and all the rest of our sages, poets, seers, critics, humorists; they were like one another and like other literary men; but Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our Literature.

—WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS, *My Mark Twain* (1920), p. 101.

A great genius, in short, that has never attained the inner control which makes genius great, a mind that has not found itself, a mind that does not know itself, a spirit that cloaks to the end in the fantasy of its temporal power the tragic reality of its own essential miscarriage!

—VAN WYCK BROOKS, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920), p. 23.

Mark Twain's parents were of good Virginia and Kentucky families in somewhat reduced circumstances. The father, John Marshall Clemens, was a lawyer who found it necessary to set up as a merchant in order to make a living. The mother, Jane Lampton, a Kentucky belle, had married him out of pique at the behavior of the man she really loved. Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in the village of Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835—the first American writer of importance to be born west of the Mississippi River. While Sam was still a small boy, his father moved to Hannibal, a somewhat larger place, on the banks of the Mississippi a hundred miles north of St. Louis. Hannibal was more Southern than Western, for the frontier had already passed farther west by the time Mark Twain was born. The life of the town and of the river is known to every reader of *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Life on the Mississippi*, which are probably his best books. The town offered better cultural advantages than has been generally supposed. The father, however, died before Sam was twelve, and his brief schooling came to an end. He was apprenticed to a printer; and a little later he worked on the *Hannibal Journal*, then edited by his older brother Orion. The New England writers were mainly college-bred, but Mark Twain, like many of the better-known writers of his generation, got much of his real education in a newspaper office. Like Whitman, Harte, Howells, and Harris, he began as a printer but was soon contributing to the paper. (Some of his early writ-

ings are to be found in Minnie M. Brashear's *Mark Twain*, son of Missouri, and in her article, "Mark Twain Juvenilia," *American Literature*, II, 25-53, March, 1930). Somewhat later he traveled as a journeyman printer to New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Keokuk, Cincinnati, and other places. At Cincinnati he came under the influence of a well-read Scotchman named Macfarlane.

In 1857 he began to learn piloting under Horace Bixby, and he served as pilot on Mississippi River steamboats until the Civil War closed the river to traffic. This period was one of the happiest of his life. Albert Bigelow Paine, the official biographer, thus describes young Clemens's appearance at this time: "Those who knew Samuel Clemens best in those days say that he was a slender, fine-looking man, well dressed—even dandified—given to patent leathers, blue serge, white duck, and fancy striped shirts." Mark Twain did a good deal of reading in his leisure hours. He was not the unlettered genius that many have supposed, and he was better read than he professed to be. His experiences on the river widened his knowledge of life as well as of literature. "In that brief, sharp schooling," he wrote later, "I got personally and familiarly acquainted with all the different types of human nature that are to be found in fiction, biography or history."

In 1861, after two weeks in the Confederate militia, Mark Twain went to Nevada as secretary to his brother Orion, who had been appointed Territorial Secretary of Nevada. The position carried with it no salary and involved little or no work. The westward journey and his experiences on the frontier are vividly, but none too accurately, described in *Roughing It* (1872). He had a little experience as a miner. More important, however, was his work on the Virginia City *Enterprise*. In Nevada he became acquainted with a talented group of journalists; among them, Joe Goodman and William Wright ("Dan de Quille"). It was in Nevada that Clemens first used the famous pseudonym "Mark Twain," "an old river term, a leads-man's call, signifying two fathoms—twelve feet."

In 1864 Mark Twain went to San Francisco to work on the *Morning Call*. San Francisco was at that time an important literary center, and here he came under the influence of Bret Harte, who was four years later to become famous almost overnight. On September 25, 1864, Mark Twain wrote to his mother and sister:

"I have engaged to write for the new literary paper—the 'Californian'—same pay as I used to receive on the 'Golden Era'—one article a week, fifty dollars a month. . . . The 'Californian' circulates among the highest class of the community, and is the best weekly literary paper in the United States—and I suppose I ought to know."

Before leaving Nevada, Mark Twain had met a man who stimulated his literary ambition—Artemus Ward (the pen name of Charles Farrar Browne). At Artemus Ward's suggestion he wrote "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras." The story reached New York too late to be included in Ward's book and was first printed in the *Saturday Press* for November 18, 1865. It was widely copied and gave Mark Twain his first taste of fame. He cared as little for the story, however, as Bret Harte cared for "Plain Language from Truthful James," which was to sweep the country a few years later. On January 20, 1866, Mark Twain wrote to his mother and sister:

"To think that, after writing many an article a man might be excused for thinking tolerably good, those New York people should single out a villainous backwoods

sketch to compliment me on!—'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog'—a squib which would never have been written but to please Artemus Ward, and then it reached New York too late to appear in his book."

In 1866 Mark Twain went to the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands as correspondent for the Sacramento *Union*. On his return he lectured for the first time and with great success in both California and Nevada. He was to become the most successful humorous lecturer of his time. In 1867 he joined a pleasure party on the *Quaker City* excursion to Europe and Palestine, writing for the *Alta California* a series of articles which were to serve as the basis for his first important book, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). The book—a great popular success—was a different sort of travel book altogether from Irving's *The Sketch Book* or Longfellow's *Outre Mer*. Here was no sentimental literary pilgrim worshipping at Old World shrines, but a native Western barbarian prepared to laugh at humbug and absurdity wherever he found them. Howells, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, reviewed the *Innocents* not unfavorably, and the review led to one of the most notable of American literary friendships; it also gave Mark Twain a literary adviser to replace Bret Harte. Even now, however, Mark Twain did not regard himself as an author but as a journalist. His next step was to purchase for \$25,000 a third interest in the *Buffalo Express*.

On February 2, 1870, Samuel Clemens was married to Olivia Langdon, daughter of a wealthy coal dealer in Elmira, New York. He had fallen romantically in love with Olivia's ivory miniature, which he first saw in her brother Charles's stateroom on the *Quaker City*. The young red-haired lover from the West got little encouragement from the Langdon family, with the exception of her father. In Elmira, says Paine, "The social protest amounted almost to an insurrection." Paine continues:

"Elmira was a conservative place—a place of pedigree and family tradition; that a stranger, a former printer, pilot, miner, wandering journalist and lecturer, was to carry off the daughter of one of the oldest and wealthiest families, was a thing not to be lightly permitted. The fact that he had achieved a national fame did not count against other considerations."

Van Wyck Brooks's view of Elmira is not flattering:

"A stagnant, fresh-water aristocracy, one and seven-eighths or two and a quarter generations deep, densely provincial, resting on a basis of angular sectarianism, eviscerated politics and raw money, ruled the roast, imposing upon all the rest of society its own type, forcing all to submit to it or to imitate it."

There is no question of Mark Twain's deep and lasting love for his wife, but Brooks has raised the question whether or not her influence upon the writer's work was good. According to Brooks, Mrs. Clemens saw in her husband not a great artist but "a candidate for gentility." Howells, however, who knew her well, said of her: "She was not only a beautiful soul, but a woman of singular intellectual power." Clemens certainly had no fixed or dependable critical standards of his own. He often could not distinguish his best work from his worst, and he could rarely resist the temptation to burlesque. He needed a capable and judicious literary adviser. Just how well Howells and Mrs. Clemens answered the need is difficult to say. It was long before either of them cared for *Huckleberry Finn*. One sympathizes with her determina-

tion that Mark Twain should live up to her ideal of him as a serious writer, but Mrs. Clemens, who was practically an invalid, had her share of Victorian squeamishness. Here are some examples of her criticisms of the manuscript of *Following the Equator*, with her husband's replies:

"Page 1002. I don't like the 'shady-principled cat that has a family in every port.' "

"Then I'll modify him just a little."

"Page 1020. 9th line from the top. I think some other word would be better than 'stench.' You have used that pretty often."

"But can't I get it in *anywhere*? You've knocked it out every time. Out it goes again. And yet 'stench' is a noble, good word."

"Page 1038. I hate to have your father pictured as lashing a slave boy."

"It's out, and my father is whitewashed."

"Page 1050. 2d line from the bottom. Change breech-clout. It's a word that you love and I abominate. I would take that and 'offal' out of the language."

"You are steadily weakening the English tongue, Livy."

Mark Twain gave up the newspaper business, and in 1871 the Clemenses moved to Hartford, Connecticut. Among Mark Twain's literary neighbors were Charles Dudley Warner and Harriet Beecher Stowe. His closest friend at Hartford, however, was the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell. Hartford was conveniently close to writers and publishers in Boston and New York, Howells, reared in Ohio, was sufficiently Western in his sympathies to understand and admire the work of Mark Twain; but literary Boston, so Howells tells us, made little of him:

"In America his popularity was as instant as it was vast. But it must be acknowledged that for a much longer time here than in England polite learning hesitated his praise. In England rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord mayors, lord chief justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts; he was desired in country houses, and his bold genius captivated the favor of periodicals which spurned the rest of our nation. But in his own country it was different. In proportion as people thought themselves refined they questioned that quality which all recognize in him now, but which was then the inspired knowledge of the simple-hearted multitude. I went with him to see Longfellow, but I do not think Longfellow made much of him, and Lowell made less. . . . It was two of my most fastidious Cambridge friends who accepted him with the English, the European entirety—namely, Charles Eliot Norton and Professor Francis J. Child. . . . I cannot say why Clemens seemed not to hit the favor of our community of scribes and scholars, as Bret Harte had done, when he came from California, and swept them before him, disrupting their dinners and delaying their lunches with impunity; but it is certain that he did not, and I had better say so."

Howells might have added that Holmes—at least in his later years—was fond of Mark Twain and that Edwin P. Whipple, once regarded as a great New England literary critic, had said early in the 'seventies: "Mark Twain is regarded chiefly as a humorist, but the exercise of his real talents would rank him with the ablest of our authors in the past fifty years."

Mark Twain began his literary career as a humorist of the Western variety, continuing the tradition of the Old Southwest; but as time went on he turned more and more to the novel. In his first novel, *The Gilded Age*, which appeared in December, 1873, he collaborated with

THE RISE OF REALISM-----1870-1914

his neighbor, Charles Dudley Warner. Its best character, Colonel Eschol (later Beriah) Sellers, was modeled on Mark Twain's cousin, James Lampton. In 1876 came *Tom Sawyer*, one of the best boys' stories ever written. In 1881 appeared *The Prince and the Pauper*, a historical novel laid in the England of the boy king, Edward VI. This was a serious book and only incidentally humorous, but it was greeted as a humorous masterpiece, to Mark Twain's disgust. *Huckleberry Finn*, his masterpiece and one of the three or four really great American novels—if *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Huckleberry Finn* can be classed as novels—was published in 1884. This picaresque romance was a long time in the writing—it was begun in 1876—and it was long before the author dared to show the manuscript to any one. "Nobody appears to have been especially concerned about Huck," remarks Paine, "except, possibly, the publisher." This novel, one suspects, was more severely censored than most of Mark Twain's books. In her childish life of her father Susy Clemens wrote:

"Papa read *Huckleberry Finn* to us in manuscript, just before it came out, and then he would leave parts of it with mama to expurgate, while he went off to the study to work, and sometimes Clara and I would be sitting with mama while she was looking the manuscript over, and I remember so well, with what pangs of regret we used to see her turn down the leaves of the pages, which meant that some delightfully terrible part must be scratched out. . . . But we gradually came to think as mama did."

Mark Twain's audience was a large one, and he made more money out of his books than any of our earlier writers had made. At one time he was spending at the rate of \$100,000 a year. But he was like his own Colonel Sellers; he wanted to be richer than he was. He went into the publishing business, first, in order to make money out of his own writings and, later, to make a fortune by selling books by subscription. He did make money out of General Grant's *Memoirs* and long boasted of paying to Mrs. Grant the largest royalty cheque in history; but *The Life of Pope Leo XIII*, which he hoped to induce every American Catholic to buy, was not a commercial success. He invested heavily in a typesetting machine which proved in the end too delicate a mechanism to work effectively. Depression came on, and in 1894 the publishing house of Charles L. Webster and Company, in which he had invested heavily, went into bankruptcy. Like Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain set to work immediately to pay off his debts by writing and lecturing. More fortunate than Scott, he managed to do this in less than four years. During the remainder of his life his friend, H. H. Rogers, of the Standard Oil Company, looked after his financial affairs.

Of Mark Twain's four children only one, Clara, later Mrs. Gabrilowitsch, survived him. Mrs. Clemens died in Florence in 1904. His last years—he died in 1910—were somewhat lonely and sad although he was honored in almost every way possible.

In later years Mark Twain's pessimism, of which there are traces in his earlier books, grew much more pronounced. Van Wyck Brooks's doubtful thesis is that this pessimism was due, not to debts, recurring illness, the deaths of his wife and three children, but to his failure to follow his natural bent, that is, to become a great artist. As a matter of history, however, humorists are often pessimists. Molière put as much of himself into *The Misanthrope* as Mark Twain did into the posthumous *The Mysterious Stranger* or Jonathan Swift into *Gulliver's Travels*. "Everything human is pathetic," wrote Mark Twain in *Following the Equator*. "The secret source of Humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven."

Mark Twain's reputation has undergone striking changes since "The Jumping Frog" gave him his first taste of fame in 1865. In spite of his great popularity as a humorous lecturer and writer, it was long before many Americans, especially among the intellectuals, took him seriously as a writer. Before he died, however, he had gained the approval of the literary classes the world over. Oxford and Yale gave him honorary degrees, and Missouri showered honors upon him. Since his death in 1910 has come the reaction which invariably comes sooner or later to the popular author. He is judged by standards of which he would have disapproved. He is seen as a gifted amateur rather than as a master of his craft. He would please the twentieth century better had he been more of a satirist. To us his novels, imperfect as they are, seem more important than his travel books or his more purely humorous writings. "At heart Clemens was romantic," said Howells; and he was certainly better as a romancer than as a satirist. Obviously, like practically every author who has had to live by his pen, Mark Twain wrote too much. Half of his books are already on their way to oblivion. In the end, however, one guesses that he will be longer remembered than any of his contemporaries except Walt Whitman. After reading the selections from Mark Twain, consider the following estimates:

"Mark Twain is one of our great representative men. He is a fulfilled promise of American life. He proved the virtues of the land and the society in which he was born and fostered. He incarnates the spirit of an epoch of American history when the nation, territorially and spiritually enlarged, entered lustily upon new adventures. In the retrospect he looms for us with Whitman and Lincoln, recognizably his countrymen, out of the shadows of the Civil War, an unmistakable native son of an eager, westward-moving people—unconventional, self-reliant, mirthful, profane, realistic, cynical, boisterous, popular, tender-hearted, touched with chivalry, and permeated to the marrow of his bones with the sentiment of democratic society and with loyalty to American institutions" (Stuart P. Sherman, 'Mark Twain,' in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, III, 1921, 2).

"He was primarily a *ruconteur*, with an 'unequalled dramatic authority,' as Howells called it. He was never the conscious artist, always the improviser. He had the garrulity and the inconsequence of the earlier comic story-tellers of the stage and tavern; and his comic sense was theirs almost without alteration" (Constance Rourke, *American Humor*, 1931, p. 211).

The standard biography is by A. B. Paine, published in 1912 in three volumes. See also *Mark Twain's Letters* (1917) in two volumes, edited by Paine; Mary Lawton, *A Lifetime with Mark Twain* (1925); Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920, 1933); Bernard DeVoto, *Mark Twain's America* (1932); M. M. Brashear, *Mark Twain: Son of Missouri* (1934); DeLancey Ferguson, *Mark Twain: Man and Legend* (1943); Samuel C. Webster (ed.), *Mark Twain: Business Man* (1946); and Edward Wageknecht, *Mark Twain* (1935). Howells's *My Mark Twain* (1910) contains some interesting criticisms of Mark Twain's various books, which were reviewed by Howells as they appeared. Most of the volumes mentioned above contain critical materials. Dixon Wecter, who wrote the chapter on Mark Twain in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948), has edited *The Love Letters of Mark Twain* (1949) and *Mark Twain to Mrs. Fairbanks* (1949). Other materials are listed in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

LETTERS*

TO THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH, IN
BOSTON

Aldrich, at that time editor of *Every Saturday*, had written for that magazine an uncomplimentary notice of some verses (widely attributed to Mark Twain) imitative of Bret Harte's "Plain Language from Truthful James." Clemens sent Aldrich a protest and soon afterward, feeling that the whole matter was unimportant, wrote a second letter asking Aldrich not to publish his protest. Aldrich replied that the protest was already in type along with the editor's apology but that if Mark Twain wished he would be glad to withdraw the apology in the next number.

472 DELAWARE ST., BUFFALO, Jan. 28 [1871]

DEAR MR. ALDRICH,—No indeed, don't take back the apology! hang it, I don't want to abuse a man's civility merely because he gives me the chance.

I hear a good deal about doing things on the "spur of the moment"—I invariably regret the things I do on the spur of the moment. That disclaimer of mine was a case in point. I am ashamed every time I think of my bursting out before an unconcerned public with that bombastic powwow about burning publishers' letters, and all that sort of imbecility, and about my not being an imitator, etc. Who would find out that I am a natural fool if I kept always cool and never let nature come to the surface. Nobody.

But I did hate to be accused of plagiarizing Bret Harte, who trimmed and trained and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse grotesquenesses to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found a certain favor in the eyes of even some of the very decentest people in the land—and this grateful remembrance of mine ought to be worth its face, seeing that Bret broke our long friendship a year ago without any cause or provocation that I am aware of.

Well, it is funny, the reminiscences that glare out from murky corners of one's memory, now and then, without warning. Just at this moment a picture flits before me: *Scene*—private room in Barnum's Restaurant, Virginia, Nevada; present, Artemus Ward, Joseph T. Goodman (editor

* The selections from Mark Twain are reprinted by permission of the authorized publishers, Harper & Brothers.

and proprietor Daily "Enterprise"), and "Dan de Quille" and myself, reporters for same; remnants of the feast thin and scattering, but *such* tautology and repetition of empty bottles everywhere visible as to be offensive to the sensitive eye; time 2.30 A.M.; Artemus thickly reciting a poem¹ about a certain infant you wot of, and interrupting himself and *being* interrupted every few lines by poundings of the table and shouts of "Splendid, by Shorzhe!" Finally, a long, vociferous, poundiferous and vitreous jingling of applause announces the conclusion, and then Artemus: "Let every man 'at loves his fellow man and 'preciates a poet 'at loves *his* fellow man, stan' up!—stan' up and drink health and long life to Thomas Bailey Aldrich!—and drink it *stanning*!" (On all hands fervent, enthusiastic, and sincerely honest attempts to comply.) Then Artemus: "Well—consider it *stanning*, and drink it just as ye are!" Which was done.

You must excuse all this stuff from a stranger, for the present, and when I see you I will apologize in full.

Do you know the prettiest fancy and the neatest that ever shot through Harte's brain? It was this: When they were trying to decide upon a vignette for the cover of the *Overland [Monthly]*, a grizzly bear (of the arms of the State of California) was chosen. Nahl Bros. carved him and the page was printed, with him in it, looking thus: [Rude sketch of a grizzly bear.]

As a bear, he was a success—he was a good bear.—But then, it was objected, that he was an *objectless* bear—a bear that *meant* nothing in particular, signified nothing,—simply stood there snarling over his shoulder at nothing—and was painfully and manifestly a boorish and ill-natured intruder upon the fair page. All hands said that—none were satisfied. They hated badly to give him up, and yet they hated as much to have him there when there was no *point* to him. But presently Harte took a pencil and drew these two simple lines under his feet and behold he was a magnificent success!—the ancient symbol of California savagery snarling at the approaching type of high and progressive Civilization, the first Overland locomotive! [Sketch of a small section of railway track.]

I just think that was nothing less than inspiration itself.

¹ Aldrich's "The Ballad of Babie Bell."

Once more I apologize, and this time I do it
"stanning!"

Yrs. Truly

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

TO WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS, IN
BOSTON

HARTFORD, Jan. 18, '76.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Thanks, and ever so many, for the good opinion of Tom Sawyer. Williams has made about 300 rattling pictures for it—some of them very dainty. Poor devil, what a genius he has and how he does murder it with rum. He takes a book of mine, and without suggestion from anybody builds no end of pictures just from his reading of it.

There was never a man in the world so grateful to another as I was to you day before yesterday, when I sat down (in still rather wretched health) to set myself to the dreary and hateful task of making final revision of Tom Sawyer, and discovered, upon opening the package of MS that your pencil marks were scattered all along. This was splendid, and swept away all labor. Instead of *reading* the MS, I simply hunted out the pencil marks and made the emendations which they suggested. I reduced the boy battle to a curt paragraph; I finally concluded to cut the Sunday school speech down to the first two sentences, leaving no suggestion of satire, since the book is to be for boys and girls; I tamed the various obscenities until I judged that they no longer carried offense. So, at a single sitting I began and finished a revision which I had supposed would occupy 3 or 4 days and leave me mentally and physically fagged out at the end. I was careful not to inflict the MS upon you until I had thoroughly and painstakingly revised it. Therefore, the only faults left were those that would discover themselves to others, not me—and these you had pointed out.

There was one expression which perhaps you overlooked. When Huck is complaining to Tom of the rigorous system in vogue at the widow's, he says the servants harass him with all manner of compulsory decencies, and he winds up by saying: "and they comb me all to hell." (No exclamation point.) Long ago, when I read that to Mrs. Clemens, she made no comment; an-

other time I created occasion to read that chapter to her aunt and her mother (both sensitive and loyal subjects of the kingdom of heaven, so to speak) and *they* let it pass. I was glad, for it was the most natural remark in the world for that boy to make (and he had been allowed few privileges of speech in the book;) when I saw that you, too, had let it go without protest, I was glad, and afraid, too—afraid you hadn't observed it. Did you? And did you question the propriety of it? Since the book is now professedly and confessedly a boy's and girl's book, that darn word bothers me some, nights, but it never did until I had ceased to regard the volume as being for adults.

Don't bother to answer *now*, (for you've writing enough to do without allowing me to add to the burden), but tell me when you see me again!²

Which we do hope will be next Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Couldn't you come now and mull over the alterations which you are going to make in your MS, and make them after you go back? Wouldn't it assist the work if you dropped out of harness and routine for a day or two and have that sort of revivification which comes of a holiday—forgetfulness of the workshop? I can always work after I've been to your house; and if you will come to mine, now, and hear the club toot their various horns over the exasperating metaphysical question which I mean to lay before them in the disguise of a literary extravaganza,³ it would just brace you up like a cordial.

(I feel sort of mean trying to persuade a man to put down a critical piece of work at a critical time, but yet I am honest in thinking it would not hurt the work nor impair your interest in it to come under the circumstances.) Mrs. Clemens says, "Maybe the Howellses could come *Monday* if they cannot come Saturday; ask them; it is worth trying." Well, how's that? *Could* you? It would be splendid if you could. Drop me a postal card—I should have a twinge of conscience if I forced you to write a letter, (I am honest about that,)—and if you find you can't make out to come, tell me that you bodies will

² Howells replied, "I'd have that swearing out in an instant," and Mark Twain changed the expression to "They comb me all to thunder."

³ "The Facts concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut."

come the *next* Saturday if the thing is possible,
and stay over Sunday.

Yrs ever
MARK.

TO ANDREW LANG, IN LONDON

1889.

- - - The critic assumes, every time, that if a book doesn't meet the cultivated-class standard, it isn't valuable. Let us apply his law all around: for if it is sound in the case of novels, narratives, pictures, and such things, it is certainly sound and applicable to all the steps which lead up to culture and make culture possible. It condemns the spelling book, for a spelling book is of no use to a person of culture; it condemns all school books and all schools which lie between the child's primer and Greek, and between the infant school and the university; it condemns all the rounds of art which lie between the cheap terra cotta groups and the Venus de Medici, and between the chromo and the Transfiguration; it requires Whitcomb Riley to sing no more till he can sing like Shakespeare, and it forbids all amateur music and will grant its sanction to nothing below the "classic."

Is this an extravagant statement? No, it is a mere statement of fact. It is the fact itself that is extravagant and grotesque. And what is the result? This—and it is sufficiently curious; the critic has actually imposed upon the world the superstition that a painting by Raphael is more valuable to the civilizations of the earth than is a chromo; and the august opera than the hurdy-gurdy and the villagers' singing society; and Homer than the little everybody's-poet whose rhymes are in all mouths to-day and will be in nobody's mouth next generation; and the Latin classics than Kipling's far-reaching bugle-note; and Jonathan Edwards than the Salvation Army; and the Venus de Medici than the plaster-cast peddler; the superstition, in a word, that the vast and awful comet that trails its cold lustre through the remote abysses of space once a century and interests and instructs a cultivated handful of astronomers is worth more to the world than the sun which warms and cheers all the nations every day and makes the crops to grow.

If a critic should start a religion it would not

have any object but to convert angels: and they wouldn't need it. The thin top crust of humanity—the cultivated—are worth pacifying, worth pleasing, worth coddling, worth nourishing and preserving with dainties and delicacies, it is true; but to be caterer to that little faction is no very dignified or valuable occupation, it seems to me; it is merely feeding the over-fed, and there must be small satisfaction in that. It is not that little minority who are already saved that are best worth trying to uplift, I should think, but the mighty mass of the uncultivated who are underneath. That mass will never see the Old Masters—that sight is for the few; but the chromo maker can lift them all one step upward toward appreciation of art; they cannot have the opera, but the hurdy-gurdy and the singing class lift them a little way toward that far light; they will never know Homer, but the passing rhymester of their day leaves them higher than he found them; they may never even hear of the Latin classics, but they will strike step with Kipling's drumbeat, and they will march; for all Jonathan Edwards's help they would die in their slums, but the Salvation Army will beguile some of them up to pure air and a cleaner life; they know no sculpture, the Venus is not even a name to them, but they are a grade higher in the scale of civilization by the ministrations of the plaster-cast than they were before it took its place upon their mantel and made it beautiful to their unexacting eyes.

Indeed I have been misjudged, from the very first. I have never tried in even one single instance, to help cultivate the cultivated classes. I was not equipped for it, either by native gifts or training. And I never had any ambition in that direction, but always hunted for bigger game—the masses. I have seldom deliberately tried to instruct them, but have done my best to entertain them. To simply amuse them would have satisfied my dearest ambition at any time; for they could get instruction elsewhere, and I had two chances to help to the teacher's one: for amusement is a good preparation for study and a good healer of fatigue after it. My audience is dumb, it has no voice in print, and so I cannot know whether I have won its approbation or only got its censure. - - ⁴

⁴ See A. B. Paine's *Mark Twain* for extracts from the article which Lang wrote at Mark Twain's request.

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER TO —

1891

... I confine myself to life with which I am familiar when pretending to portray life. But I confined myself to the *boy*-life out on the Mississippi because that had a peculiar charm for me, and not because I was not familiar with other phases of life. I was a *soldier* two weeks once in the beginning of the war, and was hunted like a rat the whole time. Familiar? My splendid Kipling himself hasn't a more burnt-in, hard-baked, and unforgettable familiarity with that death-on-the-pale-horse-with-hell-following-after, which is a raw soldier's first fortnight in the field—and which, without any doubt, is the most tremendous fortnight and the vividest he is ever going to see.

Yes, and I have shovelled silver tailings in a quartz-mill a couple of weeks, and acquired the last possibilities of culture in *that* direction. And I've done "pocket-mining" during three months in the one little patch of ground in the whole globe where Nature conceals gold in pockets—or *did* before we robbed all of those pockets and exhausted, obliterated, annihilated the most curious freak Nature ever indulged in. There are not thirty men left alive who, being told there was a pocket hidden on the broad slope of a mountain, would know how to go and find it, or have even the faintest idea of how to set about it; but I am one of the possible 20 or 30 who possess the secret, and I could go and put my hand on that hidden treasure with a most deadly precision.

And I've been a prospector, and know pay rock from poor when I find it—just with a touch of the tongue. And I've been a *silver* miner and know how to dig and shovel and drill and put in a blast. And so I know the mines and miners interiorly as well as Bret Harte knows them exteriorly.

And I was a newspaper reporter four years in cities, and so saw the inside of many things; and was reporter in a legislature two sessions and the same in Congress one session, and thus learned to know personally three sample bodies of the smallest minds and the selfishest souls and the cowardliest hearts that God makes.

And I was some years a Mississippi pilot, and familiarly knew all the different kinds of steam-boatmen—a race apart, and not like other folk.

And I was for some years a traveling "jour"

printer, and wandered from city to city—and so I know *that* sect familiarly.

And I was a lecturer on the public platform a number of seasons and was a responder to 5 toasts at all the different kinds of banquets—and so I know a great many secrets about audiences—secrets not to be got out of books, but only acquirable by experience.

And I watched over one dear project of mine 10 for years, spent a fortune on it, and failed to make it go—and the history of that would make a large book in which a million men would see themselves as in a mirror; and they would testify and say, Verily, this is not imagination; this 15 fellow has been there—and after would cast dust upon their heads, cursing and blaspheming.

And I am a publisher, and did pay to one author's widow (General Grant's) the largest 20 copyright checks this world has seen—aggregating more than £80,000 in the first year.

And I have been an author for 20 years and an ass for 55.

Now then; as the most valuable capital or culture or education usable in the building of 25 novels is personal experience I ought to be well equipped for that trade. I surely have the equipment, a wide culture, and all of it real, none of it artificial, for I don't know anything about books.

TO WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS,
IN NEW YORK

VILLA DI QUARTO, FLORENCE [ITALY],

June 6, '04.

40 DEAR HOWELLS,—Last night at 9.20 I entered Mrs. Clemens's room to say the usual goodnight—and she was dead—tho' no one knew it. She had been cheerfully talking, a moment before. She was sitting up in bed—she had not lain down 45 for months—and Katie and the nurse were supporting her. They supposed she had fainted, and they were holding the oxygen pipe to her mouth, expecting to revive her. I bent over her and looked in her face, and I think I spoke—I was 50 surprised and troubled that she did not notice me. Then we understood, and our hearts broke. How poor we are to-day!

But how thankful I am that her persecutions are ended. I would not call her back if I could.

To-day, treasured in her worn Old Testament, I found a dear and gentle letter from you, dated Far Rockaway, Sept. 13, 1896, about our poor Susy's death. I am tired and old; I wish I were with Livy.

I send my love—and hers—to you all.

S. L. C.

from LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI
(1875, 1883)

"Samuel Langhorne Clemens known to fame under the river-born pseudonym 'Mark Twain,' the leadsmen's cry for two fathoms or twelve feet—a welcome sound, meaning water safe for navigation—brought to his apprenticeship as pilot more knowledge of the River and its ways than the following pages suggested. It suited his purpose to appear bewildered, foolish, and altogether green . . ."

—DIXON WECTER.

The first twenty chapters of this book are among the best that Mark Twain ever wrote. The remaining chapters, describing his return to the river, betray signs of padding, like all of his travel books.

CHAPTER IV. THE BOYS' AMBITION

When I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades in our village¹ on the west bank of the Mississippi River. That was, to be a steamboatman. We had transient ambitions of other sorts, but they were only transient. When a circus came and went, it left us all burning to become clowns; the first negro minstrel show that ever came to our section left us all suffering to try that kind of life; now and then we had a hope that, if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates. These ambitions faded out, each in its turn; but the ambition to be a steamboatman always remained.

Once a day a cheap, gaudy packet arrived upward from St. Louis, and another downward from Keokuk. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets

empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the walls, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep—with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote "points"; instantly a negro dray man, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, "S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin'!" and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. Drays, carts, men, boys, all go hurrying from many quarters to a common center, the wharf. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the coming boat as upon a wonder they are seeing for the first time. And the boat is rather a handsome sight, too. She is long and sharp and trim and pretty; she has two tall, fancy-topped chimneys, with a gilded device of some kind swung between them; a fanciful pilot-house, all glass and "gingerbread," perched on top of the "texas" deck behind them; the paddle-boxes are gorgeous with a picture or with gilded rays above the boat's name; the boiler-deck, the hurricane-deck, and the texas deck are fenced and ornamented with clean white railings; there is a flag gallantly flying from the jack-staff; the furnace doors are open and the fires glaring bravely; the upper decks are black with passengers; the captain stands by the big bell, calm, imposing, the envy of all; great volumes of the blackest smoke are rolling and tumbling out of the chimneys—a husbanded grandeur created

¹ Hannibal, Missouri. (Author's note.)

with a bit of pitch-pine just before arriving at a town; the crew are grouped on the fore-castle; the broad stage is run far out over the port bow, and an envied deck-hand stands picturesquely on the end of it with a coil of rope in his hand; the pent steam is screaming through the gauge-cocks; the captain lifts his hand, a bell rings, the wheels stop; then they turn back, churning the water to foam, and the steamer is at rest. Then such a scramble as there is to get aboard, and to get ashore, and to take in freight and to discharge freight, all at one and the same time; and such a yelling and cursing as the mates facilitate it all with! Ten minutes later the steamer is under way again, with no flag on the jack-staff and no black smoke issuing from the chimneys. After ten more minutes the town is dead again, and the town drunkard asleep by the skids once more.

My father was a justice of the peace, and I supposed he possessed the power of life and death over all men, and could hang anybody that offended him. This was distinction enough for me as a general thing; but the desire to be a steamboatman kept intruding, nevertheless. I first wanted to be a cabin-boy, so that I could come out with a white apron on and shake a table-cloth over the side, where all my old comrades could see me; later I thought I would rather be the deck-hand who stood on the end of the stage-plank with the coil of rope in his hand, because he was particularly conspicuous. But these were only day-dreams—they were too heavenly to be contemplated as real possibilities. By and by one of our boys went away. He was not heard of for a long time. At last he turned up as apprentice engineer or “striker” on a steamboat. This thing shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings. That boy had been notoriously worldly, and I just the reverse; yet he was exalted to this eminence, and I left in obscurity and misery. There was nothing generous about this fellow in his greatness. He would always manage to have a rusty bolt to scrub while his boat tarried at our town, and he would sit on the inside guard and scrub it, where we all could see him and envy him and loathe him. And whenever his boat was laid up he would come home and swell around the town in his blackest and greasiest clothes, so that nobody could help remembering that he was a steamboatman; and he used all sorts of steam-

boat technicalities in his talk, as if he were so used to them that he forgot common people could not understand them. He would speak of the “labboard” side of a horse in an easy, natural way that would make one wish he was dead. And he was always talking bout “St. Looy” like an old citizen; he would refer casually to occasions when he was “coming down Fourth Street,” or when he was “passing by the Planter’s House,” or when there was a fire and he took a turn on the brakes of “the old Big Missouri”; and then he would go on and lie about how many towns the size of ours were burned down there that day. Two or three of the boys had long been persons of consideration among us because they had been to St. Louis once and had a vague general knowledge of its wonders, but the day of their glory was over now. They lapsed into a humble silence, and learned to disappear when the ruthless “cub” engineer approached. This fellow had money, too, and hair-oil. Also an ignorant silver watch and a showy brass watch-chain. He wore a leather belt and used no suspenders. If ever a youth was cordially admired and hated by his comrades, this one was. No girl could withstand his charms. He “cut out” every boy in the village. When his boat blew up at last, it diffused a tranquil contentment among us such as we had not known for months. But when he came home the next week, alive, renowned, and appeared in church all battered up and bandaged, a shining hero, stared at and wondered over by everybody, it seemed to us that the partiality of Providence for an undeserving reptile had reached a point where it was open to criticism.

This creature’s career could produce but one result, and it speedily followed. Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister’s son became an engineer. The doctor’s and the post-master’s sons became “mud clerks”; the whole-sale liquor dealer’s son became a barkeeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became pilots. Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary—from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay. Two months of his wages would pay a preacher’s salary for a year. Now some of us were left disconsolate. We could not get on the river—at least our parents would not let us.

So, by and by, I ran away. I said I would never come home again till I was a pilot and could come in glory. But somehow I could not manage it. I went meekly aboard a few of the boats that lay packed together like sardines at the long St. Louis wharf, and humbly inquired for the pilots, but got only a cold shoulder and short words from mates and clerks. I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being, but I had comforting day-dreams of a future when I should be a great and honored pilot, with plenty of money, and could kill some of these mates and clerks and pay for them.

CHAPTER V. I WANT TO BE A CUB-PILOT

Months afterward the hope within me struggled to a reluctant death, and I found myself without an ambition. But I was ashamed to go home. I was in Cincinnati, and I set to work to map out a new career. I had been reading about the recent exploration of the river Amazon by an expedition sent out by our government. It was said that the expedition, owing to difficulties, had not thoroughly explored a part of the country lying about the headwaters, some four thousand miles from the mouth of the river. It was only about fifteen hundred miles from Cincinnati to New Orleans, where I could doubtless get a ship. I had thirty dollars left! I would go and complete the exploration of the Amazon. This was all the thought I gave to the subject. I never was great in matters of detail. I packed my valise, and took passage on an ancient tub called the *Paul Jones*, for New Orleans. For the sum of sixteen dollars I had the scarred and tarnished splendors of "her" main saloon principally to myself, for she was not a creature to attract the eye of wiser travelers.

When we presently got under way and went poking down the broad Ohio, I became a new being, and the subject of my own admiration. I was a traveler! A word never had tasted so good in my mouth before. I had an exultant sense of being bound for mysterious lands and distant climes which I never have felt in so uplifting a degree since. I was in such a glorified condition that all ignoble feelings departed out of me, and I was able to look down and pity the untraveled with a compassion that had hardly a trace of contempt in it. Still, when we stopped at villages and wood-yards, I could not help lolling carelessly upon the railings of the boiler-

deck to enjoy the envy of the country boys on the bank. If they did not seem to discover me, I presently sneezed to attract their attention, or moved to a position where they could not help seeing me. And as soon as I knew they saw me I gaped and stretched, and gave other signs of being mightily bored with traveling.

I kept my hat off all the time, and stayed where the wind and the sun could strike me, because I wanted to get the bronzed and weather-beaten look of an old traveler. Before the second day was half gone I experienced a joy which filled me with the purest gratitude; for I saw that the skin had begun to blister and peel off my face and neck. I wished that the boys and girls at home could see me now.

We reached Louisville in time—at least the neighborhood of it. We stuck hard and fast on the rocks in the middle of the river, and lay there four days. I was now beginning to feel a strong sense of being a part of the boat's family, a sort of infant son to the captain and younger brother to the officers. There is no estimating the pride I took in this grandeur, or the affection that began to swell and grow in me for those people. I could not know how the lordly steamboatman scorns that sort of presumption in a mere landsman. I particularly longed to acquire the least trifle of notice from the big stormy mate, and I was on the alert for an opportunity to do him a service to that end. It came at last. The riotous pow-wow of setting a spar was going on down on the fore-castle, and I went down there and stood around in the way—or mostly skipping out of it—till the mate suddenly roared a general order for somebody to bring him a capstan bar. I sprang to his side and said: "Tell me where it is—I'll fetch it!"

If a rag-picker had offered to do a diplomatic service for the Emperor of Russia, the monarch could not have been more astounded than the mate was. He even stopped swearing. He stood and stared down at me. It took him ten seconds to scrape his disjointed remains together again. Then he said impressively: "Well, if this don't beat h—ll!" and turned to his work with the air of a man who had been confronted with a problem too abstruse for solution.

I crept away, and courted solitude for the rest of the day. I did not go to dinner; I stayed away from supper until everybody else had finished. I did not feel so much like a member of the

boat's family now as before. However, my spirits returned, in instalments, as we pursued our way down the river. I was sorry I hated the mate so, because it was not in (young) human nature not to admire him. He was huge and muscular, his face was bearded and whiskered all over; he had a red woman and a blue woman tattooed on his right arm—one on each side of a blue anchor with a red rope to it; and in the matter of profanity he was sublime. When he was getting out cargo at a landing, I was always where I could see and hear. He felt all the majesty of his great position, and made the world feel it, too. When he gave even the simplest order, he discharged it like a blast of lightning, and sent a long, reverberating peal of profanity thundering after it. I could not help contrasting the way in which the average landsman would give an order with the mate's way of doing it. If the landsman should wish the gangplank moved a foot farther forward, he would probably say: "James, or William, one of you push that plank forward, please"; but put the mate in his place, and he would roar out: "Here, now, start that gangplank for'ard! Lively, now! *What're* you about! Snatch it! *snatch* it! There! there! Aft again! aft again! Don't you hear me? Dash it to dash! are you going to *sleep* over it! 'Vast heaving. 'Vast heaving, I tell you! Going to heave it clear astern? WHERE're you going with that barrel! *for'ard* with it 'fore I make you swallow it, you dash-dash-dash-dashed split between a tired mud-turtle and a crippled hearse-horse!"

I wished I could talk like that.

When the soreness of my adventure with the mate had somewhat worn off, I began timidly to make up to the humblest official connected with the boat—the night watchman. He snubbed my advances at first, but I presently ventured to offer him a new chalk pipe, and that softened him. So he allowed me to sit with him by the big bell on the hurricane-deck, and in time he melted into conversation. He could not well have helped it, I hung with such homage on his words and so plainly showed that I felt honored by his notice. He told me the names of dim capes and shadowy islands as we glided by them in the solemnity of the night, under the winking stars, and by and by got to talking about himself. He seemed over-sentimental for a man whose salary was six dollars a week—or rather he might have seemed so to an older person than I.

But I drank in his words hungrily, and with a faith that might have moved mountains if it had been applied judiciously. What was it to me that he was soiled and seedy and fragrant with gin?

5 What was it to me that his grammar was bad, his construction worse, and his profanity so void of art that it was an element of weakness rather than strength in his conversation? He was a wronged man, a man who had seen trouble, and that was enough for me. As he mellowed into his plaintive history his tears dripped upon the lantern in his lap, and I cried, too, from sympathy. He said he was the son of an English nobleman—either an earl or an alderman, he could not remember which, but believed was both; his father, the nobleman, loved him, but his mother hated him from the cradle; and so while he was still a little boy he was sent to "one of them old, ancient colleges"—he couldn't remember which; and by and by his father died and his mother seized the property and "shook" him, as he phrased it. After his mother shook him, members of the nobility with whom he was acquainted used their influence to get him the position of
10 "loblolly-boy in a ship"; and from that point my watchman threw off all trammels of date and locality and branched out into a narrative that bristled all along with incredible adventures; a narrative that was so reeking with bloodshed, and so crammed with hair-breadth escapes and the most engaging and unconscious personal villainies, that I sat speechless, enjoying, shuddering, wondering, worshipping.

It was a sore blight to find out afterward that
15 he was a low, vulgar, ignorant, sentimental, half-witted humbug, an untraveled native of the wilds of Illinois, who had absorbed wildcat literature and appropriated its marvels, until in time he had woven odds and ends of the mess into this yarn, and then gone on telling it to fledglings like me, until he had come to believe it himself.

CHAPTER VI. A CUB-PILOT'S EXPERIENCE

What with lying on the rocks four days at Louisville, and some other delays, the poor old
45 *Paul Jones* fooled away about two weeks in making the voyage from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This gave me a chance to get acquainted with one of the pilots, and he taught me how to steer the boat, and thus made the fascination of river life more potent than ever for me.

It also gave me a chance to get acquainted

with a youth who had taken deck passage—more's the pity; for he easily borrowed six dollars of me on a promise to return to the boat and pay it back to me the day after we should arrive. But he probably died or forgot, for he never came. It was doubtless the former, since he had said his parents were wealthy, and he only traveled deck passage because it was cooler.²

I soon discovered two things. One was that a vessel would not be likely to sail for the mouth of the Amazon under ten or twelve years; and the other was that the nine or ten dollars still left in my pocket would not suffice for so impossible an exploration as I had planned, even if I could afford to wait for a ship. Therefore it followed that I must contrive a new career. The *Paul Jones* was now bound for St. Louis. I planned a siege against my pilot, and at the end of three hard days he surrendered. He agreed to teach me the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis for five hundred dollars, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of "learning" twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi River with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties, I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide.

The boat backed out from New Orleans at four in the afternoon, and it was "our watch" until eight. Mr. Bixby, my chief, "straightened her up," plowed her along past the sterns of the other boats that lay at the Levee, and then said, "Here, take her; shave those steamships as close as you'd peel an apple." I took the wheel, and my heartbeat fluttered up into the hundreds; for it seemed to me that we were about to scrape the side off every ship in the line, we were so close. I held my breath and began to claw the boat away from the danger; and I had my own opinion of the pilot who had known no better than to get us into such peril, but I was too wise to express it. In half a minute I had a wide margin of safety intervening between the *Paul Jones* and the ships; and within ten seconds more I was set aside in disgrace, and Mr. Bixby was

² "Deck" passage—i.e., steerage passage. (Author's note.)

going into danger again and flaying me alive with abuse of my cowardice. I was stung, but I was obliged to admire the easy confidence with which my chief loafed from side to side of his wheel, and trimmed the ships so closely that disaster seemed ceaselessly imminent. When he had cooled a little he told me that the easy water was close ashore and the current outside, and therefore we must hug the bank, up-stream, to get the benefit of the former, and stay well out, down-stream, to take advantage of the latter. In my own mind I resolved to be a down-stream pilot and leave the up-streaming to people dead to prudence.

Now and then Mr. Bixby called my attention to certain things. Said he, "This is Six-Mile Point." I assented. It was pleasant enough information, but I could not see the bearing of it. I was not conscious that it was a matter of any interest to me. Another time he said, "This is Nine-Mile Point." Later he said, "This is Twelve-Mile Point." They were all about level with the water's edge; they all looked about alike to me; they were monotonously unpicturesque. I hoped Mr. Bixby would change the subject. But no; he would crowd up around a point, hugging the shore with affection, and then say: "The slack water ends here, abreast this bunch of China trees; now we cross over." So he crossed over. He gave me the wheel once or twice, but I had no luck. I either came near chipping off the edge of a sugar-plantation, or I yawed too far from shore, and so dropped back into disgrace again and got abused.

The watch was ended at last, and we took supper and went to bed. At midnight the glare of a lantern shone in my eyes, and the night watchman said:

"Come, turn out!"

And then he left. I could not understand this extraordinary procedure; so I presently gave up trying to, and dozed off to sleep. Pretty soon the watchman was back again, and this time he was gruff. I was annoyed. I said:

"What do you want to come bothering around here in the middle of the night for? Now, as like as not, I'll not get to sleep again to-night."

The watchman said:

"Well, if this ain't good, I'm blessed."

The "off-watch" was just turning in, and I heard some brutal laughter from them, and such remarks as "Hello, watchman! ain't the new cub

turned out yet? He's delicate, likely. Give him some sugar in a rag, and send for the chamber-maid to sing 'Rock-a-by Baby,' to him."

About this time Mr. Bixby appeared on the scene. Something like a minute later I was climbing the pilot-house steps with some of my clothes on and the rest in my arms. Mr. Bixby was close behind, commenting. Here was something fresh—this thing of getting up in the middle of the night to go to work. It was a detail in piloting that had never occurred to me at all. I knew that boats ran all night, but somehow I had never happened to reflect that somebody had to get up out of a warm bed to run them. I began to fear that piloting was not quite so romantic as I had imagined it was: there was something very real and worklike about this new phase of it.

It was a rather dingy night, although a fair number of stars were out. The big mate was at the wheel, and he had the old tub pointed at a star and was holding her straight up the middle of the river. The shores on either hand were not much more than half a mile apart, but they seemed wonderfully far away and ever so vague and indistinct. The mate said:

"We've got to land at Jones's plantation, sir."

The vengeful spirit in me exulted. I said to myself, "I wish you joy of your job, Mr. Bixby; you'll have a good time finding Mr. Jones's plantation such a night as this; and I hope you never *will* find it as long as you live."

Mr. Bixby said to the mate:

"Upper end of the plantation, or the lower?"

"Upper."

"I can't do it. The stumps there are out of water at this stage. It's no great distance to the lower, and you'll have to get along with that."

"All right, sir. If Jones don't like it, he'll have to lump it, I reckon."

And then the mate left. My exultation began to cool and my wonder to come up. Here was a man who not only proposed to find this plantation on such a night, but to find either end of it you preferred. I dreadfully wanted to ask a question, but I was carrying about as many short answers as my cargo-room would admit of, so I held my peace. All I desired to ask Mr. Bixby was the simple question whether he was ass enough to really imagine he was going to find that plantation on a night when all plantations were exactly alike and all of the same color. But

I held in. I used to have fine inspirations of prudence in those days.

Mr. Bixby made for the shore and soon was scraping it, just the same as if it had been daylight. And not only that, but singing:

"Father in heaven, the day is declining," etc.

It seemed to me that I had put my life in the keeping of a peculiarly reckless outcast. Presently he turned on me and said:

"What's the name of the first point above New Orleans?"

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

"Don't *know*?"

This manner jolted me. I was down at the foot again, in a moment. But I had to say just what I had said before.

"Well, you're a smart one!" said Mr. Bixby.

"What's the name of the *next* point?"

Once more I didn't know.

"Well, this beats anything. Tell me the name of *any* point or place I told you."

I studied awhile and decided that I couldn't.

"Look here! What do you start from, above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?"

"I—I don't know."

"You—you—don't know?" mimicking my drawling manner of speech. "What *do* you know?"

"I—I—nothing, for certain."

"By the great Cæsar's ghost, I believe you! You're the stupidest dunderhead I ever saw or ever heard of, so help me Moses! The idea of *you* being a pilot—you! Why, you don't know enough to pilot a cow down a lane."

Oh, but his wrath was up! He was a nervous man, and he shuffled from one side of his wheel to the other as if the floor was hot. He would boil awhile to himself, and then overflow and scald me again.

"Look here! What do you suppose I told you the names of those points for?"

I tremblingly considered a moment, and then the devil of temptation provoked me to say:

"Well to—to—be entertaining, I thought."

This was a red rag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judged it made him blind, because he ran over the steering-oar of a trading-scow. Of course the traders sent up a volley of red-hot profanity. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. Bixby was;

because he was brimful, and here were subjects who could *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust his head out, and such an irruption followed as I never had heard before. The fainter and farther away the scowmen's curses drifted, the higher Mr. Bixby lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a seine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me in the gentlest way:

"My boy, you must get a little memorandum-book; and every time I tell you a thing, put it down right away. There's only one way to be a pilot, and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A B C."

That was a dismal revelation to me; for my memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges. However, I did not feel discouraged long. I judged that it was best to make some allowances, for doubtless Mr. Bixby was "stretching." Presently he pulled a rope and struck a few strokes on the big bell. The stars were all gone now, and the night was as black as ink. I could hear the wheels churn along the bank, but I was not entirely certain that I could see the shore. The voice of the invisible watchman called up from the hurricane-deck:

"What's this, sir?"

"Jones's plantation."

I said to myself, "I wish I might venture to offer a small bet that it isn't." But I did not chirp. I only waited to see. Mr. Bixby handled the engine-bells, and in due time the boat's nose came to the land, a torch glowed from the fore-castle, a man skipped ashore, a darky's voice on the bank said: "Gimme de k'yarp-et-bag, Mass' Jones," and the next moment we were standing up the river again, all serene. I reflected deeply awhile, and then said—but not aloud—"Well, the finding of that plantation was the luckiest accident that ever happened; but it couldn't happen again in a hundred years." And I fully believed it *was* an accident, too.

By the time we had gone seven or eight hundred miles up the river, I had learned to be a tolerably plucky up-stream steersman, in daylight; and before we reached St. Louis I had made a trifle of progress in night work, but only a trifle. I had a note-book that fairly bristled with the names of towns, "points," bars, islands, bends, reaches, etc.; but the information was to

be found only in the note-book—none of it was in my head. It made my heart ache to think I had only got half of the river set down; for as our watch was four hours off and four hours on, day and night, there was a long four-hour gap in my book for every time I had slept since the voyage began.

My chief was presently hired to go on a big New Orleans boat, and I packed my satchel and went with him. She was a grand affair. When I stood in her pilot-house I was so far above the water that I seemed perched on a mountain; and her decks stretched so far away, fore and aft, below me, that I wondered how I could ever have considered the little *Paul Jones* a large craft. There were other differences, too. The *Paul Jones's* pilot-house was a cheap, dingy, battered rattle trap, cramped for room; but here was a sumptuous glass temple; room enough to have a dance in; showy red and gold window-curtains; an imposing sofa; leather cushions and a back to the high bench where visiting pilots sit, to spin yarns and "look at the river"; bright, fanciful "cuspidores," instead of a broad wooden box filled with sawdust; nice new oil-cloth on the floor; a hospitable big stove for winter; a wheel as high as my head, costly with inlaid work; a wire tiller-rope; bright brass knobs for the bells; and tidy, white-aproned, black "texas-tender," to bring up tarts and ices and coffee during mid-watch, day and night. Now this was "something like"; and so I began to take heart once more to believe that piloting was a romantic sort of occupation after all. The moment we were under way I began to prowl about the great steamer and fill myself with joy. She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing-room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel; she had an oil-picture, by some gifted sign-painter, on every stateroom door; she glittered with no end of prism-fringed chandeliers; the clerk's office was elegant, the bar was marvelous, and the barkeeper had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost. The boiler-deck (*i. e.*, the second story of the boat, so to speak) was as spacious as a church, it seemed to me; so with the fore-castle; and there was no pitiful handful of deck-hands, firemen, and roustabouts down there, but a whole battalion of men. The fires were fiercely glaring from a long row of furnaces, and over them were eight huge boilers! This was

unutterable pomp. The mighty engines—but enough of this. I had never felt so fine before. And when I found that the regiment of natty servants respectfully “sir’d” me, my satisfaction was complete.

THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG*

(1899)

This, Mark Twain’s finest short story, appeared in *Harper’s Magazine* for December, 1899, and was republished in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and Other Stories and Essays* (1900). It is colored by the pessimism of his later years, like *What Is Man?* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, which belong to the same period. “The temptation and the downfall of a whole town,” writes Albert Bigelow Paine, “was a colossal idea, a sardonic idea, and it is colossally and sardonically worked out. Human weakness and rotten moral force were never stripped so bare or so mercilessly jeered at in the market-place. . . .

I

It was many years ago. Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in all the region round about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to teach the principles of honest dealing to its babies in the cradle, and made the like teachings the staple of their culture thenceforward through all the years devoted to their education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the way of the young people, so that their honesty could have every chance to harden and solidify, and become a part of their very bone. The neighboring towns were jealous of this honorable supremacy, and affected to sneer at Hadleyburg’s pride in it and call it vanity; but all the same they were obliged to acknowledge that Hadleyburg was in reality an incorruptible town; and if pressed they would also acknowledge that the mere fact that a young man hailed from Hadleyburg was all the recommendation he needed when he went forth from his natal town to seek for responsible employment.

But at last, in the drift of time, Hadleyburg had the ill luck to offend a passing stranger—

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possibly without knowing it, certainly without caring, for Hadleyburg was sufficient unto itself, and cared not a rap for strangers or their opinions. Still, it would have been well to make an exception in this one’s case, for he was a bitter man and revengeful. All through his wanderings during a whole year he kept his injury in mind, and gave all his leisure moments to trying to invent a compensating satisfaction for it. He contrived many plans, and all of them were good, but none of them was quite sweeping enough; the poorest of them would hurt a great many individuals, but what he wanted was a plan which would comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt. At last he had a fortunate idea, and when it fell into his brain it lit up his whole head with an evil joy. He began to form a plan at once, saying to himself, “That is the thing to do—I will corrupt the town.”

Six months later he went to Hadleyburg, and arrived in a buggy at the house of the old cashier of the bank about ten at night. He got a sack out of the buggy, shouldered it, and staggered with it through the cottage yard, and knocked at the door. A woman’s voice said “Come in,” and he entered, and set his sack behind the stove in the parlor, saying politely to the old lady who sat reading the *Missionary Herald* by the lamp:

“Pray keep your seat, madam, I will not disturb you. There—now it is pretty well concealed; one would hardly know it was there. Can I see your husband a moment, madam?”

No, he was gone to Brixton, and might not return before morning.

“Very well, madam, it is no matter. I merely wanted to leave that sack in his care, to be delivered to the rightful owner when he shall be found. I am a stranger; he does not know me; I am merely passing through the town to-night to discharge a matter which has been long in my mind. My errand is now completed, and I go pleased and a little proud, and you will never see me again. There is a paper attached to the sack which will explain everything. Good-night, madam.”

The old lady was afraid of the mysterious big stranger, and was glad to see him go. But her curiosity was roused, and she went straight to the sack and brought away the paper. It began as follows:

TO BE PUBLISHED; or, the right man sought out by private inquiry—either will answer. This sack contains gold coin weighing a hundred and sixty pounds four ounces—

"Mercy on us, and the door not locked!"

Mrs. Richards flew to it all in a tremble and locked it, then pulled down the window-shades and stood frightened, worried, and wondering if there was anything else she could do toward making herself and the money more safe. She listened awhile for burglars, then surrendered to curiosity and went back to the lamp and finished reading the paper:

I am a foreigner, and am presently going back to my own country, to remain there permanently. I am grateful to America for what I have received at her hands during my stay under her flag; and to one of her citizens—a citizen of Hadleyburg—I am especially grateful for a great kindness done me a year or two ago. Two great kindnesses, in fact. I will explain. I was a gambler. I say I WAS. I was a ruined gambler. I arrived in this village at night, hungry and without a penny. I asked for help—in the dark; I was ashamed to beg in the light. I begged of the right man. He gave me twenty dollars—that is to say, he gave me life, as I considered it. He also gave me fortune; for out of that money I have made myself rich at the gaming-table. And finally, a remark which he made to me has remained with me to this day, and has at last conquered me; and in conquering has saved the remnant of my morals; I shall gamble no more. Now I have no idea who that man was, but I want him found, and I want him to have this money, to give away, throw away, or keep, as he pleases. It is merely my way of testifying my gratitude to him. If I could stay, I would find him myself; but no matter, he will be found. This is an honest town, an incorruptible town, and I know I can trust it without fear. This man can be identified by the remark which he made to me; I feel persuaded that he will remember it.

And now my plan is this: If you prefer to conduct the inquiry privately, do so. Tell the contents of this present writing to any one who is likely to be the right man. If he shall answer, 'I am the man; the remark I made was so-and-so,'

apply the test—to wit: open the sack, and in it you will find a sealed envelope containing that remark. If the remark mentioned by the candidate tallies with it, give him the money, and ask no further questions, for he is certainly the right man.

But if you shall prefer a public inquiry, then publish this present writing in the local paper—with these instructions added, to wit: Thirty days from now, let the candidate appear at the town-hall at eight in the evening (Friday), and hand his remark, in a sealed envelope, to the Rev. Mr. Burgess (if he will be kind enough to act); and let Mr. Burgess there and then destroy the seals on the sack, open it, and see if the remark is correct; if correct, let the money be delivered, with my sincere gratitude, to my benefactor thus identified.

Mrs. Richards sat down, gently quivering with excitement, and was soon lost in thinking—after this pattern: "What a strange thing it is! . . . And what a fortune for that kind man who set his bread afloat upon the waters! . . . If it had only been my husband that did it!—for we are so poor, so old and poor! . . ." Then, with a sigh—"But it was not my Edward; no, it was not he that gave a stranger twenty dollars. It is a pity too; I see it now. . . ." Then, with a shudder—"But it is gambler's money! the wages of sin: we couldn't take it; we couldn't touch it. I don't like to be near it; it seems a defilement." She moved to a farther chair. . . . "I wish Edward would come, and take it to the bank; a burglar might come at any moment; it is dreadful to be here all alone with it."

At eleven Mr. Richards arrived, and while his wife was saying, "I am so glad you've come!" he was saying, "I'm so tired—tired clear out; it is dreadful to be poor, and have to make these dismal journeys at my time of life. Always at the grind, grind, grind, on a salary—another man's slave, and he sitting at home in his slippers, rich and comfortable."

"I am so sorry for you, Edward, you know that; but be comforted; we have our livelihood; we have our good name—"

"Yes, Mary, and that is everything. Don't mind my talk—it's just a moment's irritation and doesn't mean anything. Kiss me—there, it's all gone now, and I am not complaining any more.

What have you been getting? What's in the sack?"

Then his wife told him the great secret. It dazed him for a moment; then he said:

"It weighs a hundred and sixty pounds? Why, Mary, it's for-ty thou-sand dollars—think of it—a whole fortune! Not ten men in this village are worth that much. Give me the paper."

He skimmed through it and said:

"Isn't it an adventure! Why, it's a romance; it's like the impossible things one reads about in books, and never sees in life." He was well stirred up now; cheerful, even gleeful. He tapped his old wife on the cheek, and said, humorously, "Why, we're rich, Mary, rich; all we've got to do is to bury the money and burn the papers. If the gambler ever comes to inquire, we'll merely look coldly upon him and say: 'What is this nonsense you are talking? We have never heard of you and your sack of gold before;' and then he would look foolish, and—"

"And in the mean time, while you are running on with your jokes, the money is still here, and it is fast getting along toward burglar-time."

"True. Very well, what shall we do—make the inquiry private? No, not that: it would spoil the romance. The public method is better. Think what a noise it will make! And it will make all the other towns jealous; for no stranger would trust such a thing to any town but Hadleyburg, and they know it. It's a great card for us. I must get to the printing-office now, or I shall be too late."

"But stop—stop—don't leave me here alone with it, Edward!"

But he was gone. For only a little while, however. Not far from his own house he met the editor-proprietor of the paper, and gave him the document, and said, "Here is a good thing for you, Cox—put it in."

"It may be too late, Mr. Richards, but I'll see."

At home again he and his wife sat down to talk the charming mystery over; they were in no condition for sleep. The first question was, Who could the citizen have been who gave the stranger the twenty dollars? It seemed a simple one; both answered it in the same breath—

"Barclay Goodson."

"Yes," said Richards, "he could have done it, and it would have been like him, but there's not another in the town."

"Everybody will grant that, Edward—grant it privately, anyway. For six months, now, the village has been its own proper self once more—honest, narrow, self-righteous, and stingy."

"It is what he always called it, to the day of his death—said it right out publicly, too."

"Yes, and he was hated for it."

"Oh, of course; but he didn't care. I reckon he was the best-hated man among us, except the Reverend Burgess."

"Well, Burgess deserves it—he will never get another congregation here. Mean as the town is, it knows how to estimate *him*. Edward, doesn't it seem odd that the stranger should appoint Burgess to deliver the money?"

"Well, yes—it does. That is—that is—"

"Why so much that-is-ing? Would you select him?"

"Mary, maybe the stranger knows him better than this village does."

"Much *that* would help Burgess!"

The husband seemed perplexed for an answer; the wife kept a steady eye upon him, and waited. Finally Richards said, with the hesitancy of one who is making a statement which is likely to encounter doubt,

"Mary, Burgess is not a bad man."

His wife was certainly surprised.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed.

"He is not a bad man. I know. The whole of his unpopularity had its foundation in that one thing—the thing that made so much noise."

"That 'one thing,' indeed! As if that 'one thing' wasn't enough, all by itself."

"Plenty. Plenty. Only he wasn't guilty of it."

"How you talk! Not guilty of it! Everybody knows he *was* guilty."

"Mary, I give you my word—he was innocent."

"I can't believe it, and I don't. How do you know?"

"It is a confession. I am ashamed, but I will make it. I was the only man who knew he was innocent. I could have saved him, and—and—well, you know how the town was wrought up—I hadn't the pluck to do it. It would have turned everybody against me. I felt mean, ever so mean; but I didn't dare; I hadn't the manliness to face that."

Mary looked troubled, and for a while was silent. Then she said, stammeringly:

"I—I don't think it would have done for you

to—to— One mustn't—er—public opinion—one has to be so careful—so—" It was a difficult road, and she got mired; but after a little she got started again. "It was a great pity, but—Why, we couldn't afford it, Edward—we couldn't indeed. Oh, I wouldn't have had you do it for anything!"

"It would have lost us the good-will of so many people, Mary; and then—and then—"

"What troubles me now is, what *he* thinks of us, Edward."

"He? *He* doesn't suspect that I could have saved him."

"Oh," exclaimed the wife, in a tone of relief, "I am glad of that. As long as he doesn't know that you could have saved him, he—he—well, that makes it a great deal better. Why, I might have known he didn't know, because he is always trying to be friendly with us, as little encouragement as we give him. More than once people have twitted me with it. There's the Wilsons, and the Wilcoxes, and the Harknesses, they take a mean pleasure in saying, '*Your friend Burgess*,' because they know it pesters me. I wish he wouldn't persist in liking us; I can't think why he keeps it up."

"I can explain it. It's another confession. When the thing was new and hot, and the town made a plan to ride him on a rail, my conscience hurt me so that I couldn't stand it, and I went privately and gave him notice, and he got out of the town and staid out till it was safe to come back."

"Edward! If the town had found it out—"

"*Don't!* It scares me yet, to think of it. I repented of it the minute it was done; and I was even afraid to tell you, lest your face might betray it to somebody. I didn't sleep any that night, for worrying. But after a few days I saw that no one was going to suspect me, and after that I got to feeling glad I did it. And I feel glad yet, Mary—glad through and through."

"So do I, now, for it would have been a dreadful way to treat him. Yes, I'm glad; for really you did owe him that, you know. But, Edward, suppose it should come out yet, some day!"

"It won't."

"Why?"

"Because everybody thinks it was Goodson."

"Of course they would!"

"Certainly. And of course *he* didn't care. They persuaded poor old Sawlsberry to go and charge it on him, and he went blustering over there and

did it. Goodson looked him over, like as if he was hunting for a place on him that he could despise the most, then he says, 'So you are the Committee of Inquiry, are you?' Sawlsberry said that was about what he was. 'Hm. Do they require particulars, or do you reckon a kind of a *general* answer will do?' 'If they require particulars, I will come back, Mr. Goodson; I will take the general answer first.' 'Very well, then, tell them to go to hell—I reckon that's general enough. And I'll give you some advice, Sawlsberry; when you come back for the particulars, fetch a basket to carry the relics of yourself home in.'"

15 "Just like Goodson; it's got all the marks. He had only one vanity: he thought he could give advice better than any other person."

"It settled the business, and saved us, Mary. The subject was dropped."

20 "Bless you, I'm not doubting *that*."

Then they took up the gold-sack mystery again, with strong interest. Soon the conversation began to suffer breaks—interruptions caused by absorbed thinkings. The breaks grew more and more frequent. At last Richards lost himself wholly in thought. He sat long, gazing vacantly at the floor, and by-and-by he began to punctuate his thoughts with little nervous movements of his hands that seemed to indicate vexation. 30 Meantime his wife too had relapsed into a thoughtful silence, and her movements were beginning to show a troubled discomfort. Finally Richards got up and strode aimlessly about the room, ploughing his hands through his hair, much as a somnambulist might do who was having a bad dream. Then he seemed to arrive at a definite purpose; and without a word he put on his hat and passed quickly out of the house. His wife sat brooding, with a drawn face, and did not seem to be aware that she was alone. Now 40 and then she murmured, "Lead us not into t . . . but—but—we are so poor, so poor! . . . Lead us not into . . . Ah, who would be hurt by it?—and no one would ever know. . . . Lead us— . . ." The voice died out in mumblings. After a little she glanced up and muttered in a half-frightened, half-glad way:

45 "He is gone! But, oh dear, he may be too late—too late. . . . Maybe not—maybe there is still time." She rose and stood thinking, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. A slight shudder shook her frame, and she said, out of a dry throat, "God forgive me—it's awful to think

such things—but . . . Lord, how we are made—how strangely we are made!”

She turned the light low, and slipped stealthily over and kneeled down by the sack and felt of its ridgy sides with her hands, and fondled them lovingly; and there was a gloating light in her poor old eyes. She fell into fits of absence; and came half out of them at times to mutter, “If we had only waited!—oh, if we had only waited a little, and not been in such a hurry!”

Meantime Cox had gone home from his office and told his wife all about the strange thing that had happened, and they had talked it over eagerly, and guessed that the late Goodson was the only man in the town who could have helped a suffering stranger with so noble a sum as twenty dollars. Then there was a pause, and the two became thoughtful and silent. And by-and-by nervous and fidgety. At last the wife said, as if to herself.

“Nobody knows this secret but the Richardses . . . and us . . . nobody.”

The husband came out of his thinkings with a slight start, and gazed wistfully at his wife, whose face was become very pale; then he hesitatingly rose, and glanced furtively at his hat, then at his wife—a sort of mute inquiry. Mrs. Cox swallowed once or twice, with her hand at her throat, then in place of speech she nodded her head. In a moment she was alone, and mumbling to herself.

And now Richards and Cox were hurrying through the deserted streets, from opposite directions. They met, panting, at the foot of the printing-office stairs; by the night-light there they read each other’s face. Cox whispered:

“Nobody knows about this but us?”

The whispered answer was,

“Not a soul—on honor, not a soul!”

“If it isn’t too late to—”

The men were starting up-stairs; at this moment they were overtaken by a boy, and Cox asked:

“Is that you, Johnny?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You needn’t ship the early mail—nor *any* mail; wait till I tell you.”

“It’s already gone, sir.”

“*Gone?*” It had the sound of an unspeakable disappointment in it.

“Yes, sir. Time-table for Brixton and all the towns beyond changed to-day sir—had to get the papers in twenty minutes earlier than com-

mon. I had to rush; if I had been two minutes later—”

The men turned and walked slowly away, not waiting to hear the rest. Neither of them spoke during ten minutes; then Cox said, in a vexed tone:

“What possessed you to be in such a hurry, I can’t make out.”

The answer was humble enough:

“I see it now, but somehow I never thought, you know, until it was too late. But the next time—”

“Next time be hanged! It won’t come in a thousand years.”

Then the friends separated without a good-night, and dragged themselves home with the gait of mortally stricken men. At their homes their wives sprang up with an eager “Well?”—then saw the answer with their eyes and sank down sorrowing, without waiting for it to come in words. In both houses a discussion followed of a heated sort—a new thing; there had been discussions before, but not heated ones, not ungentle ones. The discussions to-night were a sort of seeming plagiarisms of each other. Mrs. Richards said,

“If you had only waited, Edward—if you had only stopped to think; but no, you must run straight to the printing-office and spread it all over the world.”

“It *said* publish it.”

“That is nothing; it also said do it privately, if you liked. There, now—is that true or not?”

“Why, yes—yes, it is true; but when I thought what a stir it would make, and what a compliment it was to Hadleyburg that a stranger should trust it so—”

“Oh, certainly, I know all that; but if you had only stopped to think, you would have seen that you *couldn’t* find the right man, because he is in his grave, and hasn’t left chick nor child nor relation behind him; and as long as the money went to somebody that awfully needed it, and nobody would be hurt by it, and—and—”

She broke down, crying. Her husband tried to think of some comforting thing to say, and presently came out with this:

“But after all, Mary, it must be for the best—it *must* be; we know that. And we must remember that it was so ordered—”

“Ordered! Oh, everything’s *ordered*, when a person has to find some way out when he has been stupid. Just the same, it was *ordered* that

the money should come to us in this special way, and it was you that must take it on yourself to go meddling with the designs of Providence—and who gave you the right? It was wicked, that is what it was—just blasphemous presumption, and no more becoming to a meek and humble professor of—”

“But, Mary, you know how we have been trained all our lives long, like the whole village, till it is absolutely second nature to us to stop not a single moment to think when there’s an honest thing to be done—”

“Oh, I know it, I know it—it’s been one everlasting training and training and training in honesty—honesty shielded, from the very cradle, against every possible temptation, and so it’s *artificial* honesty, and weak as water when temptation comes, as we have seen this night. God knows I never had shade nor shadow of a doubt of my petrified and indestructible honesty until now—and now, under the very first big and real temptation, I—Edward, it is my belief that this town’s honesty is as rotten as mine is; as rotten as yours is. It is a mean town, a hard, stingy towns, and hasn’t a virtue in the world but this honesty it is so celebrated for and so conceited about; and so help me, I do believe that if ever the day comes that its honesty falls under great temptation, its grand reputation will go to ruin like a house of cards. There, now, I’ve made confession, and I feel better; I am a humbug, and I’ve been one all my life, without knowing it. Let no man call me honest again—I will not have it.”

“I— Well, Mary, I feel a good deal as you do; I certainly do. It seems strange, too, so strange. I never could have believed it—never.”

A long silence followed; both were sunk in thought. At last the wife looked up and said,

“I know what you are thinking, Edward.”

Richards had the embarrassed look of a person who is caught.

“I am ashamed to confess it, Mary, but—”

“It’s no matter, Edward, I was thinking the same question myself.”

“I hope so. State it.”

“You were thinking, if a body could only guess out *what the remark was* that Goodson made to the stranger.”

“It’s perfectly true. I feel guilty and ashamed. And you?”

“I’m past it. Let us make a pallet here; we’ve

got to stand watch till the bank vault opens in the morning and admits the sack. . . . Oh, dear, oh, dear—if we hadn’t made the mistake!”

The pallet was made, and Mary said:

5 “The open sesame—what could it have been? I do wonder what that remark could have been? But come; we will get to bed now.”

“And sleep?”

“No: think.”

10 “Yes, think.”

By this time the Coxes too had completed their spat and their reconciliation, and were turning in—to think, to think, and toss, and fret, and worry over what the remark could possibly have been which Goodson made to the stranded derelict: that golden remark; that remark worth forty thousand dollars, cash.

The reason that the village telegraph-office was open later than usual that night was this: 20 The foreman of Cox’s paper was the local representative of the Associated Press. One might say its honorary representative, for it wasn’t four times a year that he could furnish thirty words that would be accepted. But this time it was different. His despatch stating what he had caught got an instant answer:

“*Send the whole thing—all the details—twelve hundred words.*”

A colossal order! The foreman filled the bill; 30 and he was the proudest man in the State. By breakfast-time the next morning the name of Hadleyburg the Incorruptible was on every lip in America, from Montreal to the Gulf, from the glaciers of Alaska to the orange-groves of Florida; and millions and millions of people were discussing the stranger and his money-sack, and wondering if the right man would be found, and hoping some more news about the matter would come soon—right away.

II

Hadleyburg village woke up world-celebrated—astonished—happy—vain. Vain beyond imagination. Its nineteen principal citizens and their wives went about shaking hands with each other, and beaming, and smiling, and congratulating. and saying *this* thing adds a new word to the dictionary—*Hadleyburg*, synonym for *incorruptible*—destined to live in dictionaries forever! 45 And the minor and unimportant citizens and their wives went around acting in much the same

way. Everybody ran to the bank to see the gold-sack; and before noon grieved and envious crowds began to flock in from Brixton and all neighboring towns; and that afternoon and next day reporters began to arrive from everywhere to verify the sack and its history and write the whole thing up anew, and make dashing free-hand pictures of the sack and of Richards's house, and the bank, and the Presbyterian church, and the Baptist church, and the public square, and the town-hall where the test would be applied and the money delivered; and damnable portraits of the Richardses, and Pinkerton the banker, and Cox, and the foreman, and Reverend Burgess, and the postmaster—and even of Jack Halliday, who was the loafing, good-natured, no-account, irreverent fisherman, hunter, boys' friend, stray-dogs' friend, typical "Sam Lawson" of the town. The little mean, smirking, oily Pinkerton showed the sack to all comers, and rubbed his sleek palms together pleasantly, and enlarged upon the town's fine old reputation for honesty and upon this wonderful endorsement of it, and hoped and believed that the example would now spread far and wide over the American world, and be epoch-making in the matter of moral regeneration. And so on, and so on.

By the end of a week things had quieted down again; the wild intoxication of pride and joy had sobered to a soft, sweet, silent delight—a sort of deep, nameless, unutterable content. All faces bore a look of peaceful, holy happiness.

Then a change came. It was a gradual change: so gradual that its beginnings were hardly noticed; maybe were not noticed at all, except by Jack Halliday, who always noticed everything; and always made fun of it, too, no matter what it was. He began to throw out chaffing remarks about people not looking quite so happy as they did a day or two ago; and next he claimed that the new aspect was deepening to positive sadness; next, that it was taking on a sick look; and finally he said that everybody was become so moody, thoughtful, and absent-minded that he could rob the meanest man in town of a cent out of the bottom of his breeches pocket and not disturb his reverie.

At this stage—or at about this stage—a saying like this was dropped at bedtime—with a sigh, usually—by the head of each of the nineteen principal households:

"Ah, what *could* have been the remark that Goodson made!"

And straightway—with a shudder—came this, from the man's wife:

5 "Oh, *don't!* What horrible thing are you mulling in your mind? Put it away from you, for God's sake!"

But that question was wrung from those men again the next night—and got the same retort. 10 But weaker.

And the third night the men uttered the question yet again—with anguish, and absently. This time—and the following night—the wives fidgeted feebly, and tried to say something. But didn't.

15 And the night after that they found their tongues and responded—longingly:

"Oh, if we *could* only guess!"

Halliday's comments grew daily more and more sparkingly disagreeable and disparaging. 20 He went diligently about, laughing at the town, individually and in mass. But his laugh was the only one left in the village: it fell upon a hollow and mournful vacancy and emptiness. Not even a smile was findable anywhere. Halliday 25 carried a cigar-box around on a tripod, playing that it was a camera, and halted all passers and aimed the thing and said, "Ready!—now look pleasant, please," but not even this capital joke could surprise the dreary faces into any softening. 30 ing.

So three weeks passed—one week was left. It was Saturday evening—after supper. Instead of the aforesaid Saturday-evening flutter and bustle and shopping and larking, the streets were empty and desolate. Richards and his old wife sat apart 35 in their little parlor—miserable and thinking. This was become their evening habit now: the life-long habit which had preceded it, of reading, knitting, and contented chat, or receiving or paying neighborly calls, was dead and gone and forgotten, ages ago—two or three weeks ago; nobody talked now, nobody read, nobody visited—the whole village sat at home, sighing, worrying, silent. Trying to guess out that remark.

45 The postman left a letter. Richards glanced listlessly at the superscription and the post-mark—unfamiliar, both—and tossed the letter on the table and resumed his might-have-beens and his hopeless dull miseries where he had left them off. Two or three hours later his wife got wearily up and was going away to bed without a good-night—custom now—but she stopped near the

letter and eyed it awhile with a dead interest, then broke it open, and began to skim it over. Richards, sitting there with his chair tilted back against the wall and his chin between his knees, heard something fall. It was his wife. He sprang to her side, but she cried out:

"Leave me alone, I am too happy. Read the letter—read it!"

He did. He devoured it, his brain reeling. The letter was from a distant State, and it said:

I am a stranger to you, but no matter: I have something to tell. I have just arrived home from Mexico, and learned about that episode. Of course you do not know who made that remark, but I know, and I am the only person living who does know. It was GOODSON. I knew him well, many years ago. I passed through your village that very night, and was his guest till the mid-night train came along. I overheard him make that remark to the stranger in the dark—it was in Hale Alley. He and I talked of it the rest of the way home, and while smoking in his house. He mentioned many of your villagers in the course of his talk—most of them in a very uncomplimentary way, but two or three favorably: among these latter yourself. I say "favorably"—nothing stronger. I remember his saying he did not actually LIKE any person in the town—not one; but that you—I THINK he said you—am almost sure—had done him a very great service once, possibly without knowing the full value of it, and he wished he had a fortune, he would leave it to you when he died, and a curse apiece for the rest of the citizens. Now, then, if it was you that did him that service, you are his legitimate heir, and entitled to the sack of gold. I know that I can trust to your honor and honesty, for in a citizen of Hadleyburg these virtues are an unfailing inheritance, and so I am going to reveal to you the remark, well satisfied that if you are not the right man you will seek and find the right one and see that poor Goodson's debt of gratitude for the service referred to is paid. This is the remark: "YOU ARE FAR FROM BEING A BAD MAN: GO, AND REFORM."

HOWARD L. STEPHENSON.

"Oh, Edward, the money is ours, and I am so grateful, oh, so grateful—kiss me, dear, it's forever since we kissed—and we needed it so—the money—and now you are free of Pinkerton and

his bank, and nobody's slave any more; it seems to me I could fly for joy."

It was a happy half-hour that the couple spent there on the settee caressing each other; it was the old days come again—days that had begun with their courtship and lasted without a break till the stranger brought the deadly money. By-and-by the wife said:

"Oh, Edward, how lucky it was you did him that grand service, poor Goodson! I never liked him, but I love him now. And it was fine and beautiful of you never to mention it or brag about it." Then, with a touch of reproach, "But you ought to have told me, Edward, you ought to have told your wife, you know."

"Well, I—er—well, Mary, you see—"

"Now stop hemming and hawing, and tell me about it, Edward. I always loved you, and now I'm proud of you. Everybody believes there was only one good generous soul in this village, and now it turns out that you—Edward, why don't you tell me?"

"Well—er—er— Why, Mary, I can't!"

"You can't? Why can't you?"

"You see, he—well, he—he made me promise I wouldn't."

The wife looked him over, and said, very slowly,

"Made—you—promise? Edward, what do you tell me that for?"

"Mary, do you think I would lie?"

She was troubled and silent for a moment, then she laid her hand within his and said:

"No . . . no. We have wandered far enough from our bearings—God spare us that! In all your life you have never uttered a lie. But now—now that the foundations of things seem to be crumbling from under us, we—we—" She lost her voice for a moment, then said, brokenly, "Lead us not into temptation. . . I think you made the promise, Edward. Let it rest so. Let us keep away from that ground. Now—that is all gone by; let us be happy again; it is no time for clouds."

Edward found it something of an effort to comply, for his mind kept wandering—trying to remember what the service was that he had done Goodson.

The couple lay awake the most of the night, Mary happy and busy, Edward busy, but not so happy. Mary was planning what she would do with the money. Edward was trying to recall that service. At first his conscience was sore on ac-

count of the lie he had told Mary—if it was a lie. After much reflection—suppose it *was* a lie? What then? Was it such a great matter? Aren't we always *acting* lies? Then why not *tell* them? Look at Mary—look what she had done. While he was hurrying off on his honest errand, what was she doing? Lamenting because the papers hadn't been destroyed and the money kept! Is theft better than lying?

That point lost its sting—the lie dropped into the background and left comfort behind it. The next point came to the front: *Had* he rendered that service? Well, here was Goodson's own evidence as reported in Stephenson's letter; there could be no better evidence than that—it was even *proof* that he had rendered it. Of course. So that point was settled. . . . No, not quite. He recalled with a wince that this unknown Mr. Stephenson was just a trifle unsure as to whether the performer of it was Richards or some other—and, oh dear, he had put Richards on his honor! He must himself decide whither that money must go—and Mr. Stephenson was not doubting that if he was the wrong man he would go honorably and find the right one. Oh, it was odious to put a man in such a situation—ah, why couldn't Stephenson have left out that doubt! What did he want to intrude that for?

Further reflection. How did it happen that *Richards's* name remained in Stephenson's mind as indicating the right man, and not some other man's name? That looked good. Yes, that looked very good. In fact, it went on looking better and better, straight along—until by-and-by it grew into positive *proof*. And then Richards put the matter at once out of his mind, for he had a private instinct that a proof once established is better left so.

He was feeling reasonably comfortable now, but there was still one other detail that kept pushing itself on his notice: of course he had done that service—that was settled; but what *was* that service? He must recall it—he would not go to sleep till he had recalled it; it would make his peace of mind perfect. And so he thought and thought. He thought of a dozen things—possible services, even probable services—but none of them seemed adequate, none of them seemed large enough, none of them seemed worth the money—worth the fortune Goodson had wished he could leave in his will. And besides, he couldn't remember having done them, anyway.

Now, then—now, then—what *kind* of a service would it be that would make a man so inordinately grateful? Ah—the saving of his soul! That must be it. Yes, he could remember, now, how he once set himself the task of converting Goodson, and labored at it as much as—he was going to say three months; but upon closer examination it shrunk to a month, then to a week, then to a day, then to nothing. Yes, he remembered now, and with unwelcome vividness, that Goodson had told him to go to thunder and mind his own business—he wasn't hankering to follow Hadleyburg to heaven!

So that solution was a failure—he hadn't saved Goodson's soul. Richards was discouraged. Then after a little came another idea: had he saved Goodson's property? No, that wouldn't do—he hadn't any. His life? That is it! Of course. Why, he might have thought of it before. This time he was on the right track, sure. His imagination-mill was hard at work in a minute, now.

Thereafter during a stretch of two exhausting hours he was busy saving Goodson's life. He saved it in all kinds of difficult and perilous ways. In every case he got it saved satisfactorily up to a certain point; then, just as he was beginning to get well persuaded that it had really happened, a troublesome detail would turn up which made the whole thing impossible. As in the matter of drowning, for instance. In that case he had swum out and tugged Goodson ashore in an unconscious state with a great crowd looking on and applauding, but when he had got it all thought out and was just beginning to remember all about it a whole swarm of disqualifying details arrived on the ground: the town would have known of it, it would glare like a limelight in his own memory instead of being an inconspicuous service which he had possibly rendered "without knowing its full value." And at this point he remembered that he couldn't swim, anyway.

Ah—*there* was a point which he had been overlooking from the start: it had to be a service which he had rendered "possibly without knowing the full value of it." Why, really, that ought to be an easy hunt—much easier than those others. And sure enough, by-and-by he found it. Goodson, years and years ago, came near marrying a very sweet and pretty girl, named Nancy Hewitt, but in some way or other the match had been broken off; the girl died, Goodson remained

a bachelor, and by-and-by became a soured one and a frank despiser of the human species. Soon after the girl's death the village found out, or thought it had found out, that she carried a spoonful of negro blood in her veins. Richards worked at these details a good while, and in the end he thought he remembered things concerning them which must have gotten mislaid in his memory through long neglect. He seemed to dimly remember that it was *he* that found out about the negro blood; that it was he that told the village; that the village told Goodson where they got it; that he thus saved Goodson from marrying the tainted girl; that he had done him this great service "without knowing the full value of it," in fact without knowing that he *was* doing it; but that Goodson knew the value of it, and what a narrow escape he had had, and so went to his grave grateful to his benefactor and wishing he had a fortune to leave him. It was all clear and simple now, and the more he went over it the more luminous and certain it grew; and at last, when he nestled to sleep satisfied and happy, he remembered the whole thing just as if it had been yesterday. In fact, he dimly remembered Goodson's *telling* him his gratitude once. Meantime Mary had spent six thousand dollars on a new house for herself and a pair of slippers for her pastor, and then had fallen peacefully to rest.

That same Saturday evening the postman had delivered a letter to each of the other principal citizens—nineteen letters in all. No two of the envelopes were alike, and no two of the superscriptions were in the same hand, but the letters inside were just like each other in every detail but one. They were exact copies of the letter received by Richards—handwriting and all—and were all signed by Stephenson, but in place of Richards's name each receiver's own name appeared.

All night long eighteen principal citizens did what their caste-brother Richards was doing at the same time—they put in their energies trying to remember what notable service it was that they had unconsciously done Barclay Goodson. In no case was it a holiday job; still they succeeded.

And while they were at this work, which was difficult, their wives put in the night spending the money, which was easy. During that one night the nineteen wives spent an average of

seven thousand dollars each out of the forty thousand in the sack—a hundred and thirty-three thousand altogether.

Next day there was a surprise for Jack Halliday. He noticed that the faces of the nineteen chief citizens and their wives bore that expression of peaceful and holy happiness again. He could not understand it, neither was he able to invent any remarks about it that could damage it or disturb it. And so it was his turn to be dissatisfied with life. His private guesses at the reasons for the happiness failed in all instances, upon examination. When he met Mrs. Wilcox and noticed the placid ecstasy in her face, he said to himself, "Her cat has had kittens"—and went and asked the cook; it was not so; the cook had detected the happiness, but did not know the cause. When Halliday found the duplicate ecstasy in the face of "Shadbelly" Billson (village nickname), he was sure some neighbor of Billson's had broken his leg, but inquiry showed that this had not happened. The subdued ecstasy in Gregory Yates's face could mean but one thing—he was a mother-in-law short; it was another mistake. "And Pinkerton—Pinkerton—he has collected ten cents that he thought he was going to lose." And so on, and so on. In some cases the guesses had to remain in doubt, in the others they proved distinct errors. In the end Halliday said to himself, "Anyway, it foots up that there's nineteen Hadleyburg families temporarily in heaven: I don't know how it happened; I only know Providence is off duty to-day."

An architect and builder from the next state had lately ventured to set up a small business in this unpromising village, and his sign had now been hanging out a week. Not a customer yet; he was a discouraged man, and sorry he had come. But his weather changed suddenly now. First one and then another chief citizen's wife said to him privately:

"Come to my house Monday week—but say nothing about it for the present. We think of building."

He got eleven invitations that day. That night he wrote his daughter and broke off her match with her student. He said she could marry a mile higher than that.

Pinkerton the banker and two or three other well-to-do men planned country-seats—but waited. That kind don't count their chickens until they are hatched.

The Wilsons devised a grand new thing—a fancy-dress ball. They made no actual promises, but told all their acquaintanceship in confidence that they were thinking the matter over and thought they should give it—"and if we do, you will be invited, of course." People were surprised, and said, one to another, "Why, they are crazy, those poor Wilsons, they can't afford it." Several among the nineteen said privately to their husbands, "It is a good idea, we will keep still till their cheap thing is over, then *we* will give one that will make it sick."

The days drifted along, and the bill of future squanderings rose higher and higher, wilder and wilder, more and more foolish and reckless. It began to look as if every member of the nineteen would not only spend his whole forty thousand dollars before receiving-day, but be actually in debt by the time he got the money. In some cases light-headed people did not stop with planning to spend, they really spent—on credit. They bought land, mortgages, farms, speculative stocks, fine clothes, horses, and various other things, paid down the bonus, and made themselves liable for the rest—at ten days. Presently the sober second thought came, and Halliday noticed that a ghastly anxiety was beginning to show up in a good many faces. Again he was puzzled, and didn't know what to make of it. "The Wilcox kittens aren't dead, for they weren't born; nobody's broken a leg; there's no shrinkage in mother-in-laws; *nothing* has happened—it is an unsolvable mystery."

There was another puzzled man, too—the Rev. Mr. Burgess. For days, wherever he went, people seemed to follow him or to be watching out for him; and if he ever found himself in a retired spot, a member of the nineteen would be sure to appear, thrust an envelope privately into his hand, whisper "To be opened at the town-hall Friday evening," then vanish away like a guilty thing. He was expecting that there might be one claimant for the sack—doubtful, however, Goodson being dead—but it never occurred to him that all this crowd might be claimants. When the great Friday came at last, he found that he had nineteen envelopes.

III

The town-hall had never looked finer. The platform at the end of it was backed by a showy draping of flags; at intervals along the walls were

festoons of flags; the gallery fronts were clothed in flags; the supporting columns were swathed in flags; all this was to impress the stranger, for he would be there in considerable force, and in a large degree he would be connected with the press. The house was full. The 412 fixed seats were occupied; also the 68 extra chairs which had been packed into the aisles; the steps of the platform were occupied; some distinguished strangers were given seats on the platform; at the horseshoe of tables which fenced the front and sides of the platform sat a strong force of special correspondents who had come from everywhere. It was the best-dressed house the town had ever produced. There were some tolerably expensive toilets there, and in several cases the ladies who wore them had the look of being unfamiliar with that kind of clothes. At least the town thought they had that look, but the notion could have arisen from the town's knowledge of the fact that these ladies had never inhabited such clothes before.

The gold-sack stood on a little table at the front of the platform where all the house could see it. The bulk of the house gazed at it with a burning interest, a mouth-watering interest, a wistful and pathetic interest; a minority of nineteen couples gazed at it tenderly, lovingly, proprietarily, and the male half of this minority kept saying over to themselves the moving little impromptu speeches of thankfulness for the audience's applause and congratulations which they were presently going to get up and deliver. Every now and then one of these got a piece of paper out of his vest pocket and privately glanced at it to refresh his memory.

Of course there was a buzz of conversation going on—there always is; but at last when the Rev. Mr. Burgess rose and laid his hand on the sack he could hear his microbes gnaw, the place was so still. He related the curious history of the sack, then went on to speak in warm terms of Hadleyburg's old and well-earned reputation for spotless honesty, and of the town's just pride in this reputation. He said that this reputation was a treasure of priceless value; that under Providence its value had now become inestimably enhanced, for the recent episode had spread this fame far and wide, and thus had focussed the eyes of the American world upon this village, and made its name for all time, as he hoped and believed, a synonym for commercial incorruptibil-

ity. [*Applause.*] "And who is to be the guardian of this noble treasure—the community as a whole? No! The responsibility is individual, not communal. From this day forth each and every one of you is in his own person its special guardian, and individually responsible that no harm shall come to it. Do you—does each of you—accept this great trust? [*Tumultuous assent.*] Then all is well. Transmit it to your children and to your children's children. To-day your purity is beyond reproach—see to it that it shall remain so. To-day there is not a person in your community who could be beguiled to touch a penny not his own—see to it that you abide in this grace. [*"We will! we will!"*] This is not the place to make comparisons between ourselves and other communities—some of them ungracious toward us; they have their ways, we have ours; let us be content. [*Applause.*] I am done. Under my hand, my friends, rests a stranger's eloquent recognition of what we are: through him the world will always henceforth know what we are. We do not know who he is, but in your name I utter your gratitude, and ask you to raise your voices in indorsement."

The house rose in a body and made the walls quake with the thunders of its thankfulness for the space of a long minute. Then it sat down, and Mr. Burgess took an envelope out of his pocket. The house held its breath while he slit the envelope open and took from it a slip of paper. He read its contents—slowly and impressively—the audience listening with tranced attention to this magic document, each of whose words stood for an ingot of gold:

"*The remark which I made to the distressed stranger was this: "You are very far from being a bad man; go, and reform."*" Then he continued:

"We shall know in a moment now whether the remark here quoted corresponds with the one concealed in the sack; and if that shall prove to be so—and it undoubtedly will—this sack of gold belongs to a fellow-citizen who will henceforth stand before the nation as the symbol of the special virtue which has made our town famous throughout the land—Mr. Billson!"

The house had gotten itself all ready to burst into a proper tornado of applause; but instead of doing it, it seemed stricken with a paralysis; there was a deep hush for a moment or two, then a wave of whispered murmurs swept the place—

of about this tenor: "*Billson! oh, come, this is too thin! Twenty dollars to a stranger—or anybody—Billson! Tell it to the marines!*" And now at this point the house caught its breath all of a sudden in a new access of astonishment, for it discovered that whereas in one part of the hall Deacon Billson was standing up with his head meekly bowed, in another part of it Lawyer Wilson was doing the same. There was a wondering silence now for a while. Everybody was puzzled, and nineteen couples were surprised and indignant.

Billson and Wilson turned and stared at each other. Billson asked, bitingly:

"Why do *you* rise, Mr. Wilson?"

"Because I have a right to. Perhaps you will be good enough to explain to the house why *you* rise?"

"With great pleasure. Because I wrote that paper."

"It is an impudent falsity! I wrote it myself."

It was Burgess's turn to be paralyzed. He stood looking vacantly at first one of the men and then the other, and did not seem to know what to do. The house was stupefied. Lawyer Wilson spoke up, now, and said,

"I ask the Chair to read the name signed to that paper."

That brought the Chair to itself, and it read out the name,

"'John Wharton *Billson.*'"

"There!" shouted Billson, "what have you got to say for yourself, now? And what kind of apology are you going to make to me and to this insulted house for the imposture which you have attempted to play here?"

"No apologies are due, sir; and as for the rest of it, I publicly charge you with pilfering my note from Mr. Burgess and substituting a copy of it signed with your own name. There is no other way by which you could have gotten hold of the test-remark; I alone, of living men, possessed the secret of its wording."

There was likely to be a scandalous state of things if this went on; everybody noticed with distress that the short-hand scribes were scribbling like mad; many people were crying "Chair, Chair! Order! order!" Burgess rapped with his gavel, and said:

"Let us not forget the proprieties due. There has evidently been a mistake somewhere, but surely that is all. If Mr. Wilson gave me an en-

velope—and I remember now that he did—I still have it.”

He took one out of his pocket, opened it, glanced at it, looked surprised and worried, and stood silent a few moments. Then he waved his hand in a wandering and mechanical way, and made an effort or two to say something, then gave it up, despondently. Several voices cried out:

“Read it! read it! What is it?”

So he began in a dazed and sleep-walker fashion:

“*The remark which I made to the unhappy stranger was this: ‘You are far from being a bad man. [The house gazed at him, marveling.] Go, and reform.’*” [Murmurs: “Amazing! what can this mean?”] This one,” said the Chair, “is signed Thurlow G. Wilson.”

“There!” cried Wilson, “I reckon that settles it! I knew perfectly well my note was purloined.”

“Purloined!” retorted Billson. “I’ll let you know that neither you nor any man of your kidney must venture to—”

The Chair. “Order, gentlemen, order! Take your seats, both of you, please.”

They obeyed, shaking their heads and grumbling angrily. The house was profoundly puzzled; it did not know what to do with this curious emergency. Presently Thompson got up. Thompson was the hatter. He would have liked to be a Nineteener; but such was not for him; his stock of hats was not considerable enough for the position. He said:

“Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, can both of these gentlemen be right? I put it to you, sir, can both have happened to say the very same words to the stranger? It seems to me—”

The tanner got up and interrupted him. The tanner was a disgruntled man; he believed himself entitled to be a Nineteener, but he couldn’t get recognition. It made him a little unpleasant in his ways and speech. Said he:

“Sho, *that’s* not the point! *That* could happen—twice in a hundred years—but not the other thing. *Neither* of them gave the twenty dollars!”

[*A ripple of applause.*]

Billson. “I did!”

Wilson. “I did!”

Then each accused the other of pilfering.

The Chair. “Order! Sit down, if you please—

both of you. Neither of the notes has been out of my possession at any moment.”

A Voice. “Good—that settles *that*!”

The Tanner. “Mr. Chairman, one thing is now plain: one of these men has been eaves-dropping under the other one’s bed, and filching family secrets. If it is not unparliamentary to suggest it, I will remark that both are equal to it. [*The Chair.* “Order! order!”] I withdraw the remark, sir, and will confine myself to suggesting that *if* one of them has overheard the other reveal the test-remark to his wife, we shall catch him now.”

A Voice. “How?”

The Tanner. “Easily. The two have not quoted the remark in exactly the same words. You would have noticed that, if there hadn’t been a considerable stretch of time and an exciting quarrel inserted between the two readings.”

A Voice. “Name the difference.”

The Tanner. “The word *very* is in Billson’s note, and not in the other.”

Many Voices. “That’s so—he’s right!”

The Tanner. “And so, if the Chair will examine the test-remark in the sack, we shall know which of these two frauds—[*The Chair.* “Order!”]—which of these two adventurers—[*The Chair.* “Order! order!”]—which of these two gentlemen—[*laughter and applause*—is entitled to wear the belt as being the first dishonest blatherskite ever bred in this town—which he has dishonored, and which will be a sultry place for him from now out!” [*Vigorous applause.*]

Many Voices. “Open it!—open the sack!”

Mr. Burgess made a slit in the sack, slid his hand in and brought out an envelope. In it were a couple of folded notes. He said:

“One of these is marked, ‘Not to be examined until all written communications which have been addressed to the Chair—if any—shall have been read.’ The other is marked ‘*The Test.*’ Allow me. It is worded—to wit:

“‘I do not require that the first half of the remark which was made to me by my benefactor shall be quoted with exactness, for it was not striking, and could be forgotten; but its closing fifteen words are quite striking, and I think easily rememberable; unless *these* shall be accurately reproduced, let the applicant be regarded as an impostor. My benefactor began by saying he seldom gave advice to any one, but that it always bore the hall-mark of high value when he

did give it. Then he said this—and it has never faded from my memory: “*You are far from being a bad man—*”’”

Fifty Voices. “That settles it—the money’s Wilson’s! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!”

People jumped up and crowded around Wilson, wringing his hand and congratulating fervently—meantime the Chair was hammering with the gavel and shouting:

“Order, gentlemen! Order! Order! Let me finish reading, please.” When quiet was restored, the reading was resumed—as follows:

““Go, and reform—or, mark my words—some day, for your sins, you will die and go to hell or Hadleyburg—TRY AND MAKE IT THE FORMER.”’”

A ghastly silence followed. First an angry cloud began to settle darkly upon the faces of the citizenship; after a pause the cloud began to rise, and a tickled expression tried to take its place; tried so hard that it was only kept under with great and painful difficulty; the reporters, the Brixtonites, and other strangers bent their heads down and shielded their faces with their hands, and managed to hold in by main strength and heroic courtesy. At this most inopportune time burst upon the stillness the roar of a solitary voice—Jack Halliday’s:

“*That’s got the hall-mark on it!*”

Then the house let go, strangers and all. Even Mr. Burgess’s gravity broke down presently, then the audience considered itself officially absolved from all restraint, and it made the most of its privilege. It was a good long laugh, and a tempestuously whole-hearted one, but it ceased at last—long enough for Mr. Burgess to try to resume, and for the people to get their eyes partially wiped; then it broke out again; and afterward yet again; then at last Burgess was able to get out these serious words:

“It is useless to try to disguise the fact—we find ourselves in the presence of a matter of grave import. It involves the honor of your town, it strikes at the town’s good name. The difference of a single word between the test-remarks offered by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Billson was itself a serious thing, since it indicated that one or the other of these gentlemen had committed a theft—”

The two men were sitting limp, nerveless, crushed; but at these words both were electrified into movement, and started to get up—

“Sit down!” said the Chair, sharply, and they obeyed. “That, as I have said, was a serious thing. And it was—but for only one of them. But the matter has become graver; for the honor of *both* is now in formidable peril. Shall I go even further, and say in inextricable peril? *Both* left out the crucial fifteen words.” He paused. During several moments he allowed the pervading stillness to gather and deepen its impressive effects, then added: “There would seem to be but one way whereby this could happen. I ask these gentlemen—Was there *collusion?—agreement?*”

A low murmur sifted through the house; its import was, “He’s got them both.”

Billson was not used to emergencies; he sat in a helpless collapse. But Wilson was a lawyer. He struggled to his feet, pale and worried, and said:

“I ask the indulgence of the house while I explain this most painful matter. I am sorry to say what I am about to say, since it must inflict irreparable injury upon Mr. Billson, whom I have always esteemed and respected until now, and in whose invulnerability to temptation I entirely believed—as did you all. But for the preservation of my own honor I must speak—and with frankness. I confess with shame—and I now beseech your pardon for it—that I said to the ruined stranger all of the words contained in the test-remark, including the disparaging fifteen. [*Sensation.*] When the late publication was made I recalled them, and I resolved to claim the sack of coin, for by every right I was entitled to it. Now I will ask you to consider this point, and weigh it well: that stranger’s gratitude to me that night knew no bounds; he said himself that he could find no words for it that were adequate, and that if he should ever be able he would repay me a thousandfold. Now, then, I ask you this: could I expect—could I believe—could I even remotely imagine—that, feeling as he did, he would do so ungrateful a thing as to add those quite unnecessary fifteen words to his test?—set a trap for me?—expose me as a slanderer of my own town before my own people assembled in a public hall? It was preposterous; it was impossible. His test would contain only the kindly opening clause of my remark. Of that I had no shadow of doubt. You would have thought as I did. You would not have expected a base betrayal from one whom you had befriended and against whom you had committed

no offense. And so, with perfect confidence, perfect trust, I wrote on a piece of paper the opening words—ending with ‘Go, and reform,’—and signed it. When I was about to put it in an envelope I was called into my back office, and without thinking I left the paper lying open on my desk.” He stopped, turned his head slowly toward Billson, waited a moment, then added: “I ask you to note this: when I returned, a little later, Mr. Billson was retiring by my street door.” (Sensation.)

In a moment Billson was on his feet and shouting:

“It’s a lie! It’s an infamous lie!”

The Chair. “Be seated, sir! Mr. Wilson has the floor.”

Billson’s friends pulled him into his seat and quieted him, and Wilson went on:

“Those are the simple facts. My note was now lying in a different place on the table from where I had left it. I noticed that, but attached no importance to it, thinking a draught had blown it there. That Mr. Billson would read a private paper was a thing which could not occur to me; he was an honorable man, and he would be above that. If you will allow me to say it, I think his extra word ‘very’ stands explained; it is attributable to a defect of memory. I was the only man in the world who could furnish here any detail of the test-mark—by *honorable* means. I have finished.”

There is nothing in the world like a persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus and upset the convictions and debase the emotions of an audience not practised in the tricks and delusions of oratory. Wilson sat down victorious. The house submerged him in tides of approving applause; friends swarmed to him and shook him by the hand and congratulated him, and Billson was shouted down and not allowed to say a word. The Chair hammered and hammered with its gavel, and kept shouting:

“But let us proceed, gentlemen, let us proceed!”

At last there was a measurable degree of quiet, and the hatter said:

“But what is there to proceed with, sir, but to deliver the money?”

Voices. “That’s it! That’s it! Come forward, Wilson!”

The Hatter. “I move three cheers for Mr. Wilson, Symbol of the special virtue which—”

The cheers burst forth before he could finish; and in the midst of them—and in the midst of the clamor of the gavel also—some enthusiasts mounted Wilson on a big friend’s shoulder and were going to fetch him in triumph to the platform. The Chair’s voice now rose above the noise—

“Order! To your places! You forget that there is still a document to be read.” When quiet had been restored he took up the document, and was going to read it, but laid it down again, saying, “I forgot; this is not to be read until all written communications received by me have first been read.” He took an envelope out of his pocket, removed its enclosure, glanced at it—seemed astonished—held it out and gazed at it—stared at it.

Twenty or thirty voices cried out:

“What is it? Read it! read it!”

And he did—slowly, and wondering:

“The remark which I made to the stranger—[*Voices.* “Hello! how’s this?”]—was this: “You are far from being a bad man. [*Voices.* “Great Scott!”] Go, and reform.”’ [*Voice.* “Oh, saw my leg off!”] Signed by Mr. Pinkerton the banker.”

The pandemonium of delight which turned itself loose now was of a sort to make the judicious weep. Those whose withers were unwrung laughed till the tears ran down; the reporters, in throes of laughter, set down disordered pot-hooks which would never in the world be decipherable; and a sleeping dog jumped up, scared out of its wits, and barked itself crazy at the turmoil. All manner of cries were scattered through the din: “We’re getting rich—two Symbols of Incorruptibility!—without counting Billson!” “*Three!*—count Shadbelly in—we can’t have too many!” “All right—Billson’s elected!” “Alas, poor Wilson—victim of *two* thieves!”

A Powerful Voice. “Silence! The Chair’s fished up something more out of its pocket.”

Voices. “Hurrah! Is it something fresh? Read it! read! read!”

The Chair [reading]. “The remark which I made,’ etc. ‘You are far from being a bad man. Go,’ etc. Signed, ‘Gregory Yates.’”

Tornado of Voices. “Four Symbols!” “‘Rah for Yates!’” “Fish again!”

The house was in a roaring humor now, and ready to get all the fun out of the occasion that might be in it. Several Nineteeners, looking pale

and distressed, got up and began to work their way toward the aisles, but a score of shouts went up:

"The doors, the doors—close the doors; no In-
corruptible shall leave this place! Sit down,
everybody!"

The mandate was obeyed.

"Fish again! Read! read!"

The Chair fished again, and once more the
familiar words began to fall from his lips—

"You are far from being a bad man—"

"Name! name! What's his name?"

"L. Ingoldsby Sargent."

"Five elected! Pile up the Symbols! Go on,
go on!"

"You are far from being a bad—"

"Name! name!"

"Nicholas Whitworth."

"Hooray! hooray! it's a symbolical day!"

Somebody wailed in, and began to sing this
rhyme (leaving out "it's") to the lovely "Mikado"
tune of "When a man's afraid, a beautiful
maid"; the audience joined in, with joy; then,
just in time, somebody contributed another
line—

"And don't you this forget—"

The house roared it out. A third line was at
once furnished—

"Corruptibles far from Hadleyburg are—"

The house roared that one too. As the last
note died, Jack Halliday's voice rose high and
clear, freighted with a final line—

"But the Symbols are here, you bet!"

That was sung, with booming enthusiasm. Then
the happy house started in at the beginning and
sang the four lines through twice, with immense
swing and dash, and finished up with a crashing
three-times-three and a tiger for "Hadleyburg
the Incorruptible and all Symbols of it which
we shall find worthy to receive the hall-mark
to-night."

Then the shoutings at the Chair began again,
all over the place:

"Go on! go on! Read! read some more! Read
all you've got!"

"That's it—go on! We are winning eternal
celebrity!"

A dozen men got up now and began to pro-
test. They said that this farce was the work of
some abandoned joker, and was an insult to the
whole community. Without a doubt these signa-
tures were all forgeries—

"Sit down! sit down! Shut up! You are con-
fessing. We'll find *your* names in the lot."

"Mr. Chairman, how many of those envelopes
have you got?"

The Chair counted.

"Together with those that have been already
examined, there are nineteen."

A storm of derisive applause broke out.

"Perhaps they all contain the secret. I move
that you open them all and read every signature
that is attached to a note of that sort—and read
also the first eight words of the note."

"Second the motion!"

It was put and carried—uproariously. Then
poor old Richards got up, and his wife rose and
stood at his side. Her head was bent down, so
that none might see that she was crying. Her
husband gave her his arm, and so supporting
her, he began to speak in a quavering voice:

"My friends, you have known us two—Mary
and me—all our lives, and I think you have liked
us and respected us—"

The Chair interrupted him:

"Allow me. It is quite true—that which you
are saying, Mr. Richards; this town *does* know
you two; it *does* like you; it *does* respect you;
more—it honors you and *loves* you—"

Halliday's voice rang out:

"That's the hall-marked truth, too! If the
Chair is right, let the house speak up and say it.
Rise! Now, then—hip! hip! hip!—all together!"

The house rose in mass, faced toward the old
couple eagerly, filled the air with a snow-storm
of waving handkerchiefs, and delivered the
cheers with all its affectionate heart.

The Chair then continued:

"What I was going to say is this: We know
your good heart, Mr. Richards, but this is not
a time for the exercise of charity toward offend-
ers. [Shouts of "Right! right!"] I see your gen-
erous purpose in your face, but I cannot allow
you to plead for these men—"

"But I was going to—"

"Please take your seat, Mr. Richards. We
must examine the rest of these notes—simple
fairness to the men who have already been ex-
posed requires this. As soon as that has been

done—I give you my word for this—you shall be heard.”

Many Voices. “Right!—the Chair is right—no interruption can be permitted at this stage! Go on!—the names! the names!—according to the terms of the motion!”

The old couple sat reluctantly down, and the husband whispered to the wife, “It is pitifully hard to have to wait; the shame will be greater than ever when they find we were only going to plead for *ourselves*.”

Straightway the jollity broke loose again with the reading of the names.

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Robert J. Titmarsh.’

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Eliphalet Weeks.’

“‘You are far from being a bad man—’ Signature, ‘Oscar B. Wilder.’”

At this point the house lit upon the idea of taking the eight words out of the Chairman’s hands. He was not unthankful for that. Thenceforward he held up each note in its turn, and waited. The house droned out the eight words in a massed and measured and musical deep volume of sound (with a daringly close resemblance to a well-known church chant)—“‘You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-d man.’” Then the Chair said, “Signature, ‘Archibald Wilcox.’” And so on, and so on, name after name, and everybody had an increasingly and gloriously good time except the wretched Nineteen. Now and then, when a particularly shining name was called, the house made the Chair wait while it chanted the whole of the test-remark from the beginning to the closing words, “And go to hell or Hadleyburg—try and make it the for-or-m-e-r!” and in these special cases they added a grand and agonized and imposing “A-a-a-men!”

The list dwindled, dwindled, dwindled, poor old Richards keeping tally of the count, wincing when a name resembling his own was pronounced, and waiting in miserable suspense for the time to come when it would be his humiliating privilege to rise with Mary and finish his plea, which he was intending to word thus: “. . . for until now we have never done any wrong thing, but have gone our humble way unreprieved. We are very poor, we are old, and have no chick or child to help us; we were sorely tempted, and we fell. It was my purpose when I got up before to make confession and

beg that my name might not be read out in this public place, for it seemed to us that we could not bear it; but I was prevented. It was just; it was our place to suffer with the rest. It has been hard for us. It is the first time we have ever heard our name fall from any one’s lips—sullied. Be merciful—for the sake of the better days; make our shame as light to bear as in your charity you can.” At this point in his reverie Mary nudged him, perceiving that his mind was absent. The house was chanting, “You are f-a-r,” etc.

“Be ready,” Mary whispered. “Your name comes now; he has read eighteen.”

The chant ended.

“Next! next! next!” came volleying from all over the house.

Burgess put his hand into his pocket. The old couple, trembling, began to rise. Burgess fumbled a moment, then said,

“I find I have read them all.”

Faint with joy and surprise, the couple sank into their seats, and Mary whispered:

“Oh, bless God, we are saved!—he has lost ours—I wouldn’t give this for a hundred of those sacks!”

The house burst out with its “Mikado” travesty, and sang it three times with ever-increasing enthusiasm, rising to its feet when it reached for the third time the closing line—

“But the Symbols are here, you bet!”

and finishing up with cheers and a tiger for ‘Hadleyburg purity and our eighteen immortal representatives of it.’”

Then Wingate, the saddler, got up and proposed cheers “for the cleanest man in town, the one solitary important citizen in it who didn’t try to steal that money—Edward Richards.”

They were given with great and moving heartiness; then somebody proposed that Richards be elected sole Guardian and Symbol of the now Sacred Hadleyburg Tradition, with power and right to stand up and look the whole sarcastic world in the face.

Passed, by acclamation; then they sang the “Mikado” again, and ended it with,

“And there’s *one* Symbol left, you bet!”

There was a pause; then—

A Voice. "Now, then, who's to get the sack?"

The Tanner (with bitter sarcasm). "That's easy. The money has to be divided among the eighteen Incorruptibles. They gave the suffering stranger twenty dollars apiece—and that remark—each in his turn—it took twenty-two minutes for the procession to move past. Staked the stranger—total contribution, \$360. All they want is just the loan back—and interest—forty thousand dollars altogether."

Many Voices [derisively]. "That's it! Divvy! divvy! Be kind to the poor—don't keep them waiting!"

The Chair. "Order! I now offer the stranger's remaining document. It says: 'If no claimant shall appear [*grand chorus of groans*], I desire that you open the sack and count out the money to the principal citizens of your town, they to take it in trust [*Cries of "Oh! Oh! Oh!"*], and use it in such ways as to them shall seem best for the propagation and preservation of your community's noble reputation for incorruptible honesty [*more cries*]'—a reputation to which their names and their efforts will add a new and far-reaching luster.' [*Enthusiastic outbursts of sarcastic applause*]. That seems to be all. No—here is a postscript:

"P. S.—CITIZENS OF HADLEYBURG: There is no test-remark—nobody made one. [*Great sensation.*] There wasn't any pauper stranger, not any twenty-dollar contribution, nor any accompanying benediction and compliment—these are all inventions. [*General buzz and hum of astonishment and delight.*] Allow me to tell my story—it will take but a word or two. I passed through your town at a certain time, and received a deep offense which I had not earned. Any other man would have been content to kill one or two of you and call it square, but to me that would have been a trivial revenge, and inadequate; for the dead do not suffer. Besides, I could not kill you all—and, anyway, made as I am, even that would not have satisfied me. I wanted to damage every man in the place, and every woman—and not in their bodies or in their estate, but in their vanity—the place where feeble and foolish people are most vulnerable. So I disguised myself and came back and studied you. You were easy game. You had an old and lofty reputation for honesty, and naturally you were proud of it—it was your treasure of treasures, the very apple of your eye. As soon as I found out that you

carefully and vigilantly kept yourselves and your children out of temptation, I knew how to proceed. Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire. I laid a plan, and gathered a list of names. My project was to corrupt Hadleyburg the Incorruptible. My idea was to make liars and thieves of nearly half a hundred smirchless men and women who had never in their lives uttered a lie or stolen a penny. I was afraid of Goodson. He was neither born nor reared in Hadleyburg. I was afraid that if I started to operate my scheme by getting my letter laid before you, you would say to yourselves, 'Goodson is the only man among us who would give away twenty dollars to a poor devil'—and then you might not bite at my bait. But Heaven took Goodson; then I knew I was safe, and I set my trap and baited it. It may be that I shall not catch all the men to whom I mailed the pretended test secret, but I shall catch the most of them, if I know Hadleyburg nature. [*Voices.* "Right—he got every last one of them."] I believe they will even steal ostensible gamble-money, rather than miss, poor, tempted, and mistreated fellows. I am hoping to eternally and everlastingly squelch your vanity and give Hadleyburg a new renown—one that will stick—and spread far. If I have succeeded, open the sack and summon the Committee on Propagation and Preservation of the Hadleyburg Reputation."

A Cyclone of Voices. "Open it! Open it! The Eighteen to the front! Committee on Propagation of the Tradition! Forward—the Incorruptibles!"

The Chair ripped the sack wide, and gathered up a handful of bright, broad, yellow coins, shook them together, then examined them—

"Friends, they are only gilded disks of lead!"

There was a crashing outbreak of delight over this news, and when the noise had subsided, the tanner called out:

"By right of apparent seniority in this business, Mr. Wilson is Chairman of the Committee on Propagation of the Tradition. I suggest that he step forward on behalf of his pals, and receive in trust the money."

A Hundred Voices. "Wilson! Wilson! Wilson! Speech! Speech!"

Wilson [in a voice trembling with anger]. "You will allow me to say, and without apologies for my language, damn the money!"

A Voice. "Oh, and him a Baptist!"

A Voice. "Seventeen Symbols left! Step up, gentlemen, and assume your trust!"

There was a pause—no response.

The Saddler. "Mr. Chairman, we've got one clean man left, anyway, out of the late aristocracy; and he needs money, and deserves it. I move that you appoint Jack Halliday to get up there and auction off that sack of gilt twenty-dollar pieces, and give the result to the right man—the man whom Hadleyburg delights to honor—Edward Richards."

This was received with great enthusiasm, the dog taking a hand again; the saddler started the bids at a dollar, the Brixton folk and Barnum's representative fought hard for it, the people cheered every jump that the bids made, the excitement climbed moment by moment higher and higher, the bidders got on their mettle and grew steadily more and more daring, more and more determined, the jumps went from a dollar up to five, then to ten, then to twenty, then fifty, then to a hundred, then—

At the beginning of the auction Richards whispered in distress to his wife: "O, Mary, can we allow it? It—it—you see, it is an honor-reward, a testimonial to purity of character, and—and—can we allow it? Hadn't I better get up and—O, Mary, what ought we to do?—what do you think we—" [*Halliday's voice.* "Fifteen I'm bid!—fifteen for the sack!—twenty!—ah, thanks!—thirty—thanks again! Thirty, thirty, thirty!—do I hear forty?—forty it is! Keep the ball rolling, gentlemen, keep it rolling!—fifty!—thanks, noble Roman!—going at fifty, fifty, fifty!—seventy!—ninety!—splendid!—a hundred!—pile it up, pile it up!—hundred and twenty—forty!—just in time!—hundred and fifty!—two hundred!—superb! Do I hear two h— thanks!—two hundred and fifty!—"]

"It is another temptation, Edward—I'm all in a tremble—but, oh, we've escaped one temptation, and that ought to warn us, to—" [*"Six did I hear?—thanks—six fifty, six f—SEVEN hundred!"*] And yet, Edward, when you think—nobody susp— [*"Eight hundred dollars!—hurrah—make it nine!—Mr. Parsons, did I hear you say—thanks!—nine!—this noble sack of virgin lead going at only nine hundred dollars, gilding and all—come! do I hear—a thousand!—gratefully yours!—did some one say eleven?—a sack which is going to be the most celebrated in the whole Uni—"]*

Oh, Edward" (*beginning to sob*), "we are so poor!—but—but—do as you think best—do as you think best."

Edward fell—that is, he sat still; sat with a conscience which was not satisfied, but which was overpowered by circumstances.

Meantime a stranger, who looked like an amateur detective gotten up as an impossible English earl, had been watching the evening's proceedings with manifest interest, and with a contented expression in his face; and he had been privately commenting to himself. He was now soliloquizing somewhat like this: "None of the Eighteen are bidding; that is not satisfactory; I must change that—the dramatic unities require it; they must buy the sack they tried to steal; they must pay a heavy price, too—some of them are rich. And another thing, when I make a mistake in Hadleyburg nature the man that puts that error upon me is entitled to a high honorarium, and some one must pay it. This poor old Richards has brought my judgment to shame; he is an honest man;—I don't understand it, but I acknowledge it. Yes, he saw my deuces—and with a straight flush, and by rights the pot is his. And it shall be a jackpot, too, if I can manage it. He disappointed me, but let that pass."

He was watching the bidding. At a thousand, the market broke; the prices tumbled swiftly. He waited—and still watched. One competitor dropped out; then another, and another. He put in a bid or two, now. When the bids had sunk to ten dollars, he added a five; some one raised him a three; he waited a moment, then flung in a fifty-dollar jump, and the sack was his—at \$1282. The house broke out in cheers—then stopped; for he was on his feet, and had lifted his hand. He began to speak.

"I desire to say a word, and ask a favor. I am a speculator in rarities, and I have dealings with persons interested in numismatics all over the world. I can make a profit on this purchase, just as it stands; but there is a way, if I can get your approval, whereby I can make every one of these leaden twenty-dollar pieces worth its face in gold, and perhaps more. Grant me that approval, and I will give part of my gains to your Mr. Richards, whose invulnerable probity you have so justly and so cordially recognized to-night; his share shall be ten thousand dollars, and I will hand him the money to-morrow. [*Great applause from the house.* But the "invulnerable

probity" made the Richardses blush prettily; however, it went for modesty, and did no harm.] If you will pass my proposition by a good majority—I would like a two-thirds vote—I will regard that as the town's consent, and that is all I ask. Rarities are always helped by any device which will rouse curiosity and compel remark. Now if I may have your permission to stamp upon the faces of each of these ostensible coins the names of the eighteen gentlemen who—"

Nine-tenths of the audience were on their feet in a moment—dog and all—and the proposition was carried with a whirlwind of approving applause and laughter.

They sat down, and all the Symbols except "Dr." Clay Harkness got up, violently protesting against the proposed outrage, and threatening to—

"I beg you not to threaten me," said the stranger, calmly. "I know my legal rights, and am not accustomed to being frightened at bluster." [*Applause.*] He sat down. "Dr." Harkness saw an opportunity here. He was one of the two very rich men of the place, and Pinkerton was the other. Harkness was proprietor of a mint; that is to say, a popular patent medicine. He was running for the Legislature on one ticket, and Pinkerton on the other. It was a close race and a hot one, and getting hotter every day. Both had strong appetites for money; each had bought a great tract of land, with a purpose; there was going to be a new railway, and each wanted to be in the Legislature and help locate the route to his own advantage; a single vote might make the decision, and with it two or three fortunes. The stake was large, and Harkness was a daring speculator. He was sitting close to the stranger. He leaned over while one or another of the other Symbols was entertaining the house with protests and appeals, and asked, in a whisper,

"What is your price for the sack?"

"Forty thousand dollars."

"I'll give you twenty."

"No."

"Twenty-five."

"No."

"Say thirty."

"The price is forty thousand dollars; not a penny less."

"All right, I'll give it. I will come to the hotel at ten in the morning. I don't want it known; will see you privately."

"Very good." Then the stranger got up and said to the house:

"I find it late. The speeches of these gentlemen are not without merit, not without interest, not without grace; yet if I may be excused I will take my leave. I thank you for the great favor which you have shown me in granting my petition. I ask the Chair to keep the sack for me until to-morrow, and to hand these three five-hundred-dollar notes to Mr. Richards." They were passed up to the Chair. "At nine I will call for the sack, and at eleven will deliver the rest of the ten thousand to Mr. Richards in person, at his home. Good-night."

Then he slipped out, and left the audience making a vast noise, which was composed of a mixture of cheers, the "Mikado" song, dog-disapproval, and the chant, "You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-d man—a-a-a-men!"

IV

At home the Richardses had to endure congratulations and compliments until midnight. Then they were left to themselves. They looked a little sad, and they sat silent and thinking. Finally Mary sighed and said,

"Do you think we are to blame, Edward—*much* to blame?" and her eyes wandered to the accusing triplet of big bank-notes lying on the table, where the congratulators had been gloating over them and reverently fingering them. Edward did not answer at once; then he brought out a sigh and said, hesitatingly:

"We—we couldn't help it, Mary. It—well, it was ordered. *All* things are."

Mary glanced up and looked at him steadily, but he didn't return the look. Presently she said:

"I thought congratulations and praises always tasted good. But—it seems to me, now—Edward?"

"Well?"

"Are you going to stay in the bank?"

"N-no."

"Resign?"

"In the morning—by note."

"It does seem best."

Richards bowed his head in his hands and muttered:

"Before, I was not afraid to let oceans of people's money poor through my hands, but—Mary, I am so tired, so tired—"

"We will go to bed."

At nine in the morning the stranger called

for the sack and took it to the hotel in a cab. At ten Harkness had a talk with him privately. The stranger asked for and got five checks on a metropolitan bank—drawn to “Bearer,”—four for \$1500 each, and one for \$34,000. He put one of the former in his pocket-book, and the remainder, representing \$38,500, he put in an envelope, and with these he added a note, which he wrote after Harkness was gone. At eleven he called at the Richards house and knocked. Mrs. Richards peeped through the shutters, then went and received the envelope, and the stranger disappeared without a word. She came back flushed and a little unsteady on her legs, and gasped out:

“I am sure I recognized him! Last night it seemed to me that maybe I had seen him somewhere before.”

“He is the man that brought the sack here?”

“I am almost sure of it.”

“Then he is the ostensible Stephenson too, and sold every important citizen in this town with his bogus secret. Now if he has sent checks instead of money, we are sold too, after we thought we had escaped. I was beginning to feel fairly comfortable once more, after my night’s rest, but the look of that envelope makes me sick. It isn’t fat enough; \$8500 in even the largest bank-notes makes more bulk than that.”

“Edward, why do you object to checks?”

“Checks signed by Stephenson! I am resigned to take the \$8500 if it could come in bank-notes—for it does seem that it was so ordered, Mary—but I have never had much courage, and I have not the pluck to try to market a check signed with that disastrous name. It would be a trap. That man tried to catch me; we escaped somehow or other; and now he is trying a new way. If it is checks—”

“Oh, Edward, it is *too* bad!” and she held up the checks and began to cry.

“Put them in the fire! quick! we mustn’t be tempted. It is a trick to make the world laugh at us, along with the rest, and—Give them to me, since you can’t do it!” He snatched them and tried to hold his grip till he could get to the stove; but he was human, he was a cashier, and he stopped a moment to make sure of the signature. Then he came near to fainting.

“Fan me, Mary, fan me! They are the same as gold!”

“Oh, how lovely, Edward! Why?”

“Signed by Harkness. What can the mystery of that be, Mary?”

“Edward, do you think—”

“Look here—look at this! Fifteen—fifteen—fifteen—thirty-four. Thirty-eight thousand five hundred! Mary, the sack isn’t worth twelve dollars, and Harkness—apparently—has paid about par for it.”

“And does it all come to us, do you think—instead of the ten thousand?”

“Why, it looks like it. And the checks are made to ‘Bearer,’ too.”

“Is that good, Edward? What is it for?”

“A hint to collect them at some distant bank, I reckon. Perhaps Harkness doesn’t want the matter known. What is that—a note?”

“Yes. It was with the checks.”

It was in the “Stephenson” handwriting, but there was no signature. It said:

20

I am a disappointed man. Your honesty is beyond the reach of temptation. I had a different idea about it, but I wronged you in that, and I beg pardon, and do it sincerely. I honor you—and that is sincere, too. This town is not worthy to kiss the hem of your garment. Dear sir, I made a square bet with myself that there were nineteen debauchable men in your self-righteous community. I have lost. Take the whole pot, you are entitled to it.

30

Richards drew a deep sigh, and said:

“It seems written with fire—it burns so. Mary—I am miserable again.”

35

“I, too. Ah, dear, I wish—”

“To think, Mary—he *believes* in me.”

“Oh, don’t, Edward—I can’t bear it.”

“If those beautiful words were deserved, Mary—and God knows I believed I deserved them once—I think I could give the forty thousand dollars for them. And I would put that paper away, as representing more than gold and jewels, and keep it always. But now—We could not live in the shadow of its accusing presence, Mary.”

40

He put it in the fire.

A messenger arrived and delivered an envelope. Richards took from it a note and read it; it was from Burgess:

45

You saved me, in a difficult time. I saved you last night. It was at cost of a lie, but I made the sacrifice freely, and out of a grateful heart. None

50

in this village knows so well as I know how brave and good and noble you are. At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing as you do of that matter of which I am accused, and by the general voice condemned; but I beg that you will at least believe that I am a grateful man; it will help me to bear my burden.

[Signed] BURGESS.

"Saved, once more. And on such terms!" He put the note in the fire. "I—I wish I were dead, Mary, I wish I were out of it all."

"Oh, these are bitter, bitter days, Edward. The stabs, through their very generosity, are so deep—and they come so fast!"

Three days before the election each of two thousand voters suddenly found himself in possession of a prized memento—one of the renowned bogus double-eagles. Around one of its faces was stamped these words: "THE REMARK I MADE TO THE POOR STRANGER WAS—" Around the other face was stamped these: "GO, AND REFORM. [SIGNED] PINKERTON." Thus the entire remaining refuse of the renowned joke was emptied upon a single head, and with calamitous effect. It revived the recent vast laugh and concentrated it upon Pinkerton; and Harkness's election was a walk-over.

Within twenty-four hours after the Richardses had received their checks their consciences were quieting down, discouraged; the old couple were learning to reconcile themselves to the sin which they had committed. But they were to learn, now, that a sin takes on new and real terrors when there seems a chance that it is going to be found out. This gives it a fresh and most substantial and important aspect. At church the morning sermon was of the usual pattern; it was the same old things said in the same old way; they had heard them a thousand times and found them innocuous, next to meaningless, and easy to sleep under; but now it was different: the sermon seemed to bristle with accusations; it seemed aimed straight and specially at people who were concealing deadly sins. After church they got away from the mob of congratulators as soon as they could, and hurried homeward, chilled to the bone at they did not know what—vague, shadowy, indefinite fears. And by chance they caught a glimpse of Mr. Burgess as he turned a corner. He paid no attention to their

nod of recognition! He hadn't seen it; but they did not know that. What could his conduct mean? It might mean—it might mean—oh, a dozen dreadful things. Was it possible that he knew that Richards could have cleared him of guilt in that bygone time, and had been silently waiting for a chance to even up accounts? At home, in their distress they got to imagining that their servant might have been in the next room listening when Richards revealed the secret to his wife that he knew of Burgess's innocence; next, Richards began to imagine that he had heard the swish of a gown in there at that time; next, he was sure he *had* heard it. They would call Sarah in, on a pretext, and watch her face: if she had been betraying them to Mr. Burgess, it would show in her manner. They asked her some questions—questions which were so random and incoherent and seemingly purposeless that the girl felt sure that the old people's minds had been affected by their sudden good fortune; the sharp and watchful gaze which they bent upon her frightened her, and that completed the business. She blushed, she became nervous and confused, and to the old people these were plain signs of guilt—guilt of some fearful sort or other—without doubt she was a spy and a traitor. When they were alone again they began to piece many unrelated things together and get horrible results out of the combination. When things had got about to the worst, Richards was delivered of a sudden gasp, and his wife asked,

"Oh, what is it?—what is it?"

"The note—Burgess's note! Its language was sarcastic, I see it now." He quoted: "'At bottom you cannot respect me, *knowing*, as you do, of *that matter* of which I am accused'—oh, it is perfectly plain, now, God help me! He knows that I know! You see the ingenuity of the phrasing. It was a trap—and like a fool, I walked into it. And Mary—?"

"Oh, it is dreadful—I know what you are going to say—he didn't return your transcript of the pretended test-remark."

"No—kept it to destroy us with. Mary, he has exposed us to some already. I know it—I know it well. I saw it in a dozen faces after church. Ah, he wouldn't answer our nod of recognition—he knew what he had been doing!"

In the night the doctor was called. The news

went around in the morning that the old couple were rather seriously ill—prostrated by the exhausting excitement growing out of their great windfall, the congratulations, and the late hours, the doctor said. The town was sincerely distressed; for these old people were about all it had left to be proud of, now.

Two days later the news was worse. The old couple were delirious, and were doing strange things. By witness of the nurses, Richards had exhibited checks—for \$8500? No—for an amazing sum—\$38,500! What could be the explanation of this gigantic piece of luck?

The following day the nurses had more news—and wonderful. They had concluded to hide the checks, lest harm come to them; but when they searched they were gone from under the patient's pillow—vanished away. The patient said:

"Let the pillow alone; what do you want?"

"We thought it best that the checks—"

"You will never see them again—they are destroyed. They came from Satan. I saw the hell-brand on them, and I knew they were sent to betray me to sin." Then he fell to gabbling strange and dreadful things which were not clearly understandable, and which the doctor admonished them to keep to themselves.

Richards was right; the checks were never seen again.

A nurse must have talked in her sleep, for within two days the forbidden gabblings were the property of the town; and they were of a surprising sort. They seemed to indicate that Richards had been a claimant for the sack himself, and that Burgess had concealed that fact and then maliciously betrayed it.

Burgess was taxed with this and stoutly denied it. And he said it was not fair to attach weight to the chatter of a sick old man who was out of his mind. Still, suspicion was in the air, and there was much talk.

After a day or two it was reported that Mrs. Richards's delirious deliveries were getting to be duplicates of her husband's. Suspicion flamed up into conviction, now, and the town's pride in the purity of its one undiscredited important citizen began to dim down and flicker toward extinction.

Six days passed, then came more news. The old couple were dying. Richards's mind cleared

in his latest hour, and he sent for Burgess. Burgess said:

"Let the room be cleared. I think he wishes to say something in privacy."

"No!" said Richards. "I want witnesses. I want you all to hear my confession, so that I may die a man, and not a dog. I was clean—artificially—like the rest; and like the rest I fell when temptation came. I signed a lie, and claimed the miserable sack. Mr. Burgess remembered that I had done him a service, and in gratitude (and ignorance) he suppressed my claim and saved me. You know the thing that was charged against Burgess years ago. My testimony, and mine alone, could have cleared him, and I was a coward, and left him to suffer disgrace—"

"No—no—Mr. Richards, you—"

"My servant betrayed my secret to him—"

"No one has betrayed anything to me—"

—"and then he did a natural and justifiable thing, he repented of the saving kindness which he had done me, and he *exposed* me—as I deserved—"

"Never!—I make oath—"

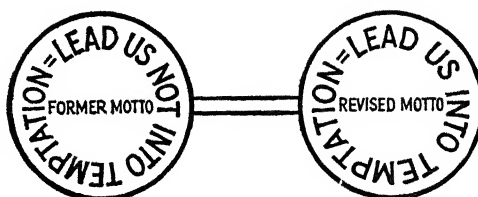
"Out of my heart I forgive him."

Burgess's impassioned protestations fell upon deaf ears; the dying man passed away without knowing that once more he had done poor Burgess a wrong. The old wife died that night.

The last of the sacred Nineteen had fallen a prey to the fiendish sack; the town was stripped of the last rag of its ancient glory. Its mourning was not showy, but it was deep.

By act of the Legislature—upon prayer and petition—Hadleyburg was allowed to change its name to (never mind what—I will not give it away), and leave one word out of the motto that for many generations had graced the town's official seal.

It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again.



JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

1848 - 1908

Your art is not only an art addition to our sum of national achievement, but it has also always been an addition to the forces that tell for decency, and above all for the blotting out of sectional antagonism.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT TO JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, October 12, 1901.

Joel Chandler Harris was born near Eatonton, in middle Georgia, on December 9, 1848, a date now annually observed in the schools of the state. He was an illegitimate child. From his Irish father he apparently derived his red hair and his ready wit. He acquired a taste for reading from his mother, who took in sewing for a living. His first desire to write grew out of hearing her read *The Vicar of Wakefield*. At the age of twelve, he was employed by a planter named Joseph Addison Turner to set type on a paper called the *Countryman*, modeled on the *Spectator*. At "Turnwold" Harris heard the Negro slaves tell their folk tales, and began to contribute surreptitiously to the *Countryman*. Turner became his critic and advisor and taught him to stick to his subject and condense what he had to say in order to make it more effective. After the Civil War, Harris worked on newspapers in Macon, Forsyth, Savannah, and Atlanta. In 1876 he went to Atlanta to work on the *Atlanta Constitution*, where he was associated with Henry W. Grady, well-known orator of the New South.

In 1878 the *Constitution* lost one of its men, Sam W. Small, who had been writing anecdotes of Negro character in which "Uncle Si" figured prominently. Harris, when asked to continue these, decided to try something else. The result was the Uncle Remus stories, which were so widely copied that in 1880 he brought out his first volume, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*. Other volumes followed: *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1883), *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892), *Told by Uncle Remus* (1905), *Uncle Remus and the Little Boy* (1910), and *Uncle Remus Returns* (1918). Harris always maintained that his literary career was an accident, and he wrote to Mark Twain that it was the matter and not the manner of the stories which had made them popular. Mark Twain replied: "In reality the stories are only alligator pears—one eats them merely for the sake of the dressing. 'Uncle Remus' is most deftly drawn and is a lovable and delightful creation; he and the little boy and their relations with each other are bright, fine literature, and worthy to live." Of his leading character, Harris said: "He was not an invention of my own, but a human syndicate, I might say, of three or four old darkies whom I had known. I just walloped them together into one person and called him

'Uncle Remus,' You must remember that sometimes the negro is a genuine and original philosopher."

Harris wrote a number of stories dealing with the white people of Georgia. The most ambitious is *Gabriel Tolliver: A Story of Reconstruction* (1902). Of some interest also is *On the Wing of Occasions* (1900), stories of the Confederate secret service. The standard biography is by his daughter-in-law, Julia Collier Harris (1918). See also R. L. Wiggins, *The Life of Joel Chandler Harris* (1918). In 1931 Mrs. Julia Collier Harris published *Joel Chandler Harris, Editor and Essayist*, a collection of his non-fiction contributions to newspapers and magazines. Three of these deal with the question of literature in the South. "The very spice and essence of all literature, the very marrow and essence of all literary art is its localism," he wrote in 1879. But in spite of its "localism," he maintained, literature must not be sectional. "We have no Southern literature worthy of the name, because an attempt has been made to give it the peculiarities of sectionalism rather than to impart to it the flavor of localism." In other words, the writer must deal with provincial materials but his point of view must be national.

"The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story," given below, probably originated not in Africa but in India. It is found in various forms in nearly all parts of the world. See Mrs. Ruth I. Cline, "The Tar-Baby Story," *American Literature*, II, 72-78 (March, 1930). Brer Rabbit is a type of the Negro slave. In his introduction to the volume from which the story is taken, Harris wrote: ". . . it needs no scientific investigation to show why he [the Negro] selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox. It is not virtue that triumphs, but helplessness; it is not malice, but mischievousness." See John Stafford, "Patterns of Meaning in *Nights with Uncle Remus*," *American Literature*, XVIII, 89-108 (May, 1946), and Jay B. Hubbell, "Letters of Uncle Remus," *Southwest Review*, XXIII, 216-223 (January, 1938). Further references are given in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

from UNCLE REMUS: HIS SONGS AND HIS SAYINGS* (1880)

CHAPTER II. THE WONDERFUL TAR-BABY STORY

"Didn't the fox *never* catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy the next evening.

"He come mighty nigh it, honey, sho's you born—Brer Fox did. One day atter Brer Rabbit fool 'im wid dat calamus root, Brer Fox went ter wuk en got 'im some tar, en mix it wid some turkentime, en fix up a contrapshun wat he call a Tar-Baby, en he tuck dish yer Tar-Baby en he sot 'er in de big road, en den he lay off in de bushes fer to see wat de news wuz gwineter be. En he didn't hatter wait long, nudder, kaze bimeby here come Brer Rabbit pacin' down de road—

lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—des ez sassy ez a jay-bird. Brer Fox, he lay low. Brer Rabbit come prancin' 'long twel he spy de Tar-Baby, en den he fotch up on his behime legs like he wuz 'stonished. De Tar-Baby, she sot dar, she did, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Mawnin'!" sez Brer Rabbit, sezee—'nice wedder dis mawnin',' sezee.

10 "Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'How duz yo' sym'tums seem ter segashuate?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

"Brer Fox, he wink his eye slow, en lay low, en de Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin'.

15 "'How you come on, den? Is you deaf?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. 'Kaze if you is, I kin holler louder,' sezee.

"Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Youer stuck up, dat's w'at you is,' says Brer

* The two selections from *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* are reprinted by permission of D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc.

Rabbit, sezee, 'en I'm gwineter kyore you, dat's w'at I'm gwineter do,' sezee.

"Brer Fox, he sorter chuckle in his stummuck, he did, but Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin'.

"I'm gwineter larn you how ter talk ter 'specttubble fokes ef hit's de las' ack,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. 'Ef you don't take off dat hat en tell me howdy. I'm gwineter bus' you wide open,' sezee.

"Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"Brer Rabbit keep on axin' 'im, en de Tar-Baby, she keep on sayin' nothin', 'twel present'y Brer Rabbit draw back wid his fis', he did, en blip he tuck 'er side er de head. His fis' stuck, en he can't pull loose. De tar hilt 'im. But Tar-Baby, she stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Ef you don't lemme loose, I'll knock you agin,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, en wid dat he fotch 'er a wipe wid de udder han', en dat stuck. Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low.

"'Tu'n me loose, fo' I kick de natal stuffin' outen you,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, but de Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nothin'. She des hilt on, en den Brer Rabbit lose de usc er his feet in de same way. Brer Fox, he lay low. Den Brer Rabbit squall out dat ef de Tar-Baby don't tu'n 'im loose he butt 'er cranksided. En den he butted, en his head got stuck. Den Brer Fox, he sa'ntered fort', lookin' des ez innercent ez one er yo' mammy's mockin'-birds.

"'Howdy, Brer Rabbit,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. 'You look sorter stuck up dis mawnin',' sezee, en den he rolled on de groun', en laughed en laughed twel he couldn't laugh no mo'. 'I speck you'll take dinner wid me dis time, Brer Rabbit. I done laid in some calamus root, en I ain't gwineter take no skuse,' sez Brer Fox, sezee."

Here Uncle Remus paused, and drew a two-pound yam out of the ashes.

"Did the fox eat the rabbit?" asked the little boy to whom the story had been told.

"Dat's all de fur de tale goes," replied the old man. "He mout, en den agin he moutent. Some say Judge B'ar come 'long en loosed 'im—some say he didn't. I hear Miss Sally callin'. You better run 'long."

CHAPTER IV. HOW MR. RABBIT WAS TOO SHARP FOR MR. FOX

"Uncle Remus," said the little boy one evening, when he found the old man with little or

nothing to do, "did the fox kill and eat the rabbit when he caught him with the Tar-Baby?"

"Law, honey, ain't I tell you 'bout dat?" replied the old darkey, chuckling slyly. "I 'clar ter gashus I ought er tole you dat, but old man Nod wuz ridin' on my eyeleds 'twel a leetle mo'n I'd a dis-member'd my own name, en den on to dat here come yo' mammy hollerin' atter you.

"W'at I tell you w'en I fus' begin? I tole you Brer Rabbit wuz a monstus soon creetur; leas' ways dat's w'at I laid out fer ter tell you. Well, den, honey, don't you go en make no udder calkalashuns, kaze in dem days Brer Rabbit en his fambly wuz at de head er de gang w'en enny racket wuz on han', en dar dey stayed. 'Fo' you begins ter wipe yo' eyes 'bout Brer Rabbit, you wait en see whar'bouts Brer Rabbit gwineter fetch up at. But dat's needer yer ner dar.

"W'en Brer Fox fine Brer Rabbit mixt up wid de Tar-Baby, he feel mighty good, en he roll on de groun' en laff. Bimeby he up'n say, sezee:

"Well, I speck I got you dis time, Brer Rabbit,' sezee; 'maybe I ain't, but I speck I is. You been runnin' roun' here sassin' atter me a mighty long time, but I speck you done come ter de een' er de row. You bin cuttin' up yo' capers en bouncin' 'roun' in dis neighborhood ontwel you come ter b'leeve yo'se'f de boss er de whole gang. En den youer allers some'rs whar you got no bizness,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. 'Who ax you fer ter come en strike up a 'quaintance wid dish yer Tar-Baby? En who stuck you up dar whar you iz? Nobody in de roun' worril. You des tuck en jam yo'se'f on dat Tar-Baby widout waitin' fer enny invite,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en dar you is, en dar you'll stay twel I fixes up a bresh-pile and fires her up, gaze I'm gwineter bobbycue you dis day, sho,' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

"Den Brer Rabbit talk mighty 'umble.

"I don't keer w'at you do wid me, Brer Fox,' sezee, 'so you don't fling me in dat brier-patch. Roas' me, Brer Fox,' sezee, 'but don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"'Hit's so much trouble fer ter kindle a fier,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'dat I speck I'll hatter hang you,' sezee.

"Hang me des ez high as you please, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but do fer de Lord's sake don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"I ain't got no string,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en now I speck I'll hatter drown you,' sezee.

"Drown me des ez deep ez you please, Brer

Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but do don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"'Dey ain't no water nigh,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en now I speck I'll hatter skin you,' sezee.

"'Skin me, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'snatch out my eyeballs, t'ar out my years by de roots, en cut off my legs,' sezee, 'but do please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

"'Co'se Brer Fox wanter hurt Brer Rabbit bad ez he kin, so he cotch 'im by de behime legs en slung 'im right in de middle er de brier-patch. Dar wuz a considerbul flutter whar Brer Rabbit

struck de bushes, en Brer Fox sorter hang 'round' for ter see w'at wuz gwineter happen. Bimeby he hear somebody call 'im, en way up de hill he see Brer Rabbit settin' cross-legged on a chinkapin log koamin' de pitch outen his har wid a chip. Den Brer Fox know dat he bin swop off mighty bad. Brer Rabbit wuz bleedzed fer ter fling back some er his sass, en he holler out:

10 " 'Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch!' en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers."

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

1837 - 1920

I find this young man worthy.

—HAWTHORNE'S note introducing Howells to Emerson.

Howells had real gifts, of which he made the most. Refinement, humor, sympathy—fidelity to external manner and rare skill in catching the expression of life—a passion for truth and a jealous regard for his art: he had all these qualities, yet they were not enough to make him a great realist. He belonged to the Age of Innocence and with its passing his works have been laid away. . . . Howells the artist mistook his calling. He was not by temperament a novelist. He lacked the sense of drama, a grasp of the rough fabric of life, the power to deal imaginatively with the great and tragic realities. His genius was rather that of a whimsical essayist, a humorous observer of the illogical ways of men. . . . Not an original genius like Mark Twain, far from a turbulent soul like Herman Melville, Howells was the reporter of his generation—the greatest literary figure of a drab negative age when the older literary impulse was slackening, and the new was slowly displacing it. . . . A humane and lovable soul, he was the embodiment of all that was kindly and generous in an America that was not wholly given over to the ways of the Gilded Age—an America that loved beauty and served culture even amidst the turmoil of revolution.

—V. L. PARRINGTON, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III, 252-253.

Howells was born on March 1, 1837, at Martin's Ferry, Ohio. His father was a Quaker of Welsh descent. His mother was Irish and Pennsylvania German. Like his contemporaries, Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Joel Chandler Harris, Howells got much of his education in a print-

ing office. As a youth, he read and wrote whenever he had the opportunity. For a long time his chief ambition, like that of many another novelist, was to be a poet. One of his early admirations was Heinrich Heine, who exercised such a spell over him that Lowell finally wrote: "You must sweat the Heine out of you as men do mercury." Unlike many Western writers, Howells did not believe that the East had willfully neglected the writers of his section; and, himself an early contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, he had no particular desire to write about the West. His eyes were upon New England. His visit in 1860 to Boston, Cambridge, and Concord, which he describes so delightfully in his *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900), was in the nature of a pilgrimage. Moncure D. Conway has left a brief description in his *Autobiography* of the attractive young poet whom he saw in Cincinnati about the time of the New England pilgrimage:

"Never shall I forget the day when he came to see us in Cincinnati. There was about him a sincerity and simplicity, a repose of manner along with a maturity of strength, surprising in a countenance so young,—and I must add, beautiful,—that I knew perfectly well my new friend had a great career before him."

Howells did not hit it off so well with Emerson and Thoreau, but he was tremendously impressed by Hawthorne and Lowell. In his *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* he has described the dinner which Lowell, then editing the *Atlantic*, gave for him. The other guests were James T. Fields, the publisher, and Holmes, the chief contributor of that magazine. Holmes, not realizing how good a prophet he was, "leaned over towards his host, and said, with a laughing look at me, 'Well, James, this is something like the apostolic succession; this is the laying on of hands.' " Back in Ohio, Howells wrote to Fields:

"The truth is, there is no place quite so good as Boston—God bless it! and I look forward to living there some day—being possibly the linchpin in the hub. I wonder if I could not find enough writing there, on different journals, literary and otherwise, to employ me, and support me in comfortable poverty? I know that the pen is a feeble instrument with which to keep the wolf from the door, but then, what will not youth dare—to hope?"

Not till five years later, however, was Howells to live in New England. A campaign life of Lincoln, which he wrote without having seen the subject of his biography ("... and I missed the greatest chance of my life," he says), brought him an appointment as American Consul at Venice. His four years in Italy gave him a chance not only to see something of Europe but to read and write; they were better than four years in college would have been. In 1862 he married Elinor Gertrude Mead.

Returning to America in 1865, he worked for a few weeks on the New York *Nation*, recently founded by E. L. Godkin; and then he went to Boston as assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. What the *Atlantic* expected of him appears in his letter to Fields, now its editor, February 6, 1866:

"These duties I understand to be: examination of mss. offered to the *Atlantic*; correspondence with contributors; reading proof for the magazine after its revision by the printers; and writing the *Reviews and Literary Notices*, for which I am to receive fifty dollars a week, while I am to be paid extra for anything I may contribute to the body of the magazine."

More and more, as time passed, Fields came to depend upon his capable associate; and from 1871 to 1881 Howells was editor-in-chief. In this position he exerted a wide influence through

his reviews and by his ability to accept or reject articles. He was, on the whole, one of the ablest of American magazine editors. He might, however, one feels, have done more to attract promising writers outside of New England, as Holland and Gilder were doing on *Scribner's Monthly*. Howells had become in a sense the custodian of the Brahmin literary tradition. He was not critical of the New England poets who had brought the magazine into being. As late as 1892 he wrote: ". . . most of American literature worth speaking of has been written there [in Cambridge and Boston]." Howells's editorial judgment was sounder in prose than in verse. We should hardly expect him to care for Whitman's free verse, some of which was offered to the *Atlantic*, but one is surprised to find him rejecting Lanier's "Corn," a remarkable poem in spite of its unevenness. Howells's assistant, George Parsons Lathrop, "never understood Mr. Howells's tests of availability in poems, he confessed; he thought them erratic and not understandable" (L. Frank Tooker, *The Joys and Tribulations of an Editor*, p. 170).

In fiction, however, Howells had very definite ideals, and he did all he could to promote the cause of realism and of better craftsmanship. While still on the staff of the *Atlantic*, he wrote his earlier pieces of fiction. By the time of his retirement from the editor's chair in 1881 he was ready for his best work. *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) are perhaps his best novels. His conception of the novel is suggested by a passage published in the *Century Magazine* in November, 1882, and reprinted in his *Criticism and Fiction* (1891):

"The art of fiction has, in fact, become a finer art in our day than it was with Dickens and Thackeray. We could not suffer the confidential attitude of the latter now, or the mannerisms of the former, any more than we could endure the prolixity of Richardson or the coarseness of Fielding. These great men are of the past—they and their methods and interests; even Trollope and Reade are not of the present. The new school derives from Hawthorne and George Eliot rather than others; but it studies human nature more in its wonted aspects, and finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not less vital motives. The moving accident is certainly not its trade; and it prefers to avoid all manner of dire catastrophes. It is largely influenced by French fiction in form, but it is the realism of Daudet rather than the realism of Zola that prevails with it, and it has a soul of its own which is above recording the bruitish pursuit of a woman by a man, which seems to be the chief end of the French novelist."

Howells's suggestion that the art of Henry James was a finer art than that of Dickens or Thackeray brought an outburst of protest from British critics.

Twentieth-century American realists are singularly ungrateful to Howells for his long fight for realism. They denounce him for teaching a doctrine that he did not dare to put into practice. They object especially to his reticence in matters of sex. They seize eagerly upon the unfortunate passage in his *Criticism and Fiction* (1891) which, divorced from its context, reads: "Our novelists, therefore, concern themselves with the more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American, and seek the universal in the individual rather than in the social interests." As a matter of fact, Howells had at this time little or nothing of the Pollyanna conception of American life. He wrote to Henry James, on October 10, 1888:

"I'm not in a very good humor with 'America' myself. It seems to be the most grotesquely illogical thing under the sun; and I suppose I love it less because it won't let me love it more. I should hardly like to trust pen and ink with all the audacity of my social ideas; but after fifty years of optimistic content with 'civilization' and its ability to come out all right in the end, I now abhor it, and feel

that it is coming out all wrong in the end, unless it bases itself anew on a real equality."

In his later years Howells's social sympathies were very strong. His reading of the Russian novelists, especially Tolstoy (see *My Literary Passions*, 1895), had something to do with this development. He had the courage to express his unpopular opinions in print. After the Chicago "anarchists" had been condemned in 1887, Howells, believing the trial a gross miscarriage of justice, wrote a public letter of protest to the *New York Tribune*. He wrote also to Governor John P. Altgeld, of Illinois, who by pardoning the condemned men sacrificed a promising political career (see Vachel Lindsay's poem, "The Eagle that is Forgotten," given upon p. 706). Although Howells became a pronounced liberal, he could not wholly accept Henry George's single tax as a panacea for all the ills of the society. When he put his social and economic ideas into fiction, as in *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894), he did not sacrifice his art to propaganda, as Edward Bellamy did in his later novels. Like Mark Twain and William Vaughn Moody, he disapproved of the war with Spain and the war with the Filipinos which followed it. On April 3, 1898, he wrote to his sister Aurelia:

"Of course we are deafened by war-talk here. You will not be surprised to hear that I think we are wickedly wrong. We have no right to interfere in Cuba, and we have no cause of quarrel with Spain. At the very best we propose to do evil that good may come. If we have war it will be at the cost of a thousand times more suffering than Spain has inflicted or could inflict on Cuba. After war will come the piling up of fortunes again; the craze for wealth will fill all brains, and every good cause will be set back. We shall have an era of blood-bought prosperity, and the chains of capitalism will be welded on the nation more firmly than ever."

Soon after resigning his position on the *Atlantic* in 1881, Howells had moved to New York, where he was for years literary adviser to Harper and Brothers. He wrote many delightful little essays for the Editor's Easy Chair department of *Harper's Magazine*. New York had by this time definitely become the publishing center. Although Howells never again lived in Boston, he sometimes looked back regretfully in that direction. On July 15, 1900, he wrote to Henry James:

"I can understand your hunger for New England, in these later years. I feel it myself in New York, even, though it is not my country. It has a sort of strange, feminine fascination. It is like a girl, sometimes a young girl, and sometimes an old girl, but wild and shy and womanly sweet, always, with a sort of unitarian optimism in its air."

Howells lived to be highly honored. Yale and Oxford gave him the degree of Litt. D. In 1908 he was elected President of the newly formed American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and he held the position until his death in 1920. On his seventy-fifth birthday in 1912 he was given a dinner which was attended by many authors and notables, including President Taft. Before his death, however, Howells found himself in a literary era to which he hardly belonged and with which he had little sympathy—in spite of the fact that it marked the triumph of the realism which he had so long advocated. On October 9, 1915, he wrote to Joyce Kilmer, author of "Trees": "I like you, my dear young brother, not only because you love beauty, but decency also. There are so many of our brood I could willingly take out and step on."

Howells was little inclined to live in the past. Once, however, in a letter to E. C. Stedman, March 1, 1907, at a time when American literature was at a particularly low ebb, he wrote:

"No, my dear friend, the fellows and fellowesses of this day are not the peers of us in ours. It is a source of great pride with me to think that when I was trying my best and you were doing so much better, we were not of the latter-day make. You had a distinct voice in verse, a brave gayety, a lyrical splendor, such as no other of us could rival you in. . . ."

"Well, we lived in a great time. If we have outlived it, so much the worse for this time."

Howells was a better critic of his own achievement than most authors are. On August 3, 1902, at a time when the historical romance was in vogue, he wrote to Brander Matthews:

"Here [in America] the book [*The Kentons*] has been fairly killed by the stupid and stupefying cry of 'commonplace people.' I shall not live long enough to live this down, but possibly my books may. I confess that I am disheartened. I had hoped I was helping my people know themselves in the delicate beauty of their everyday lives, and to find cause for pride in the loveliness of an apparently homely average, but they don't want it. They bray at my flowers picked from the fruitful fields of our common life, and turn aside among the thistles with keen appetites for the false and impossible. *Pazienza!*"

The next year, 1903, he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, who had sent him some old letters in which Henry James had spoken of Howells:

"In a way I think their criticism very just; I have often thought my intellectual raiment was more than my intellectual body, and that I might finally be convicted, not of having nothing *on*, but of that worse nakedness of having nothing *in*. He speaks of me with my style, and such mean application as I was making of it, as seeming to him like a poor man with a diamond which he does not know what to do with; and mostly I suppose I *have* cut rather inferior window glass with it. But I am not sorry for having wrought in common, crude material so much; that is the right American stuff; . . ."

Whatever posterity may ultimately decide as to the merits of Howells's work—and he certainly wrote too much—it is clear that he was, with the possible exception of Whitman, the most influential writer America has had since the Civil War. What particularly impresses one today is the long list of able writers whom he encouraged and promoted. Most conspicuous among these are Mark Twain and Henry James, both of whom he backed when it was not the popular thing to do. Although his readers cared little for the stories of James, Howells continued to publish them in the *Atlantic*. He quickly made up his mind that Mark Twain was not a mere newspaper humorist but a great writer, and he gave him every assistance—even to reading proof for him. And all this was at a time when few of the Boston literati saw anything of literary value in Mark Twain's work. Nor was Howells blind to the merits of his younger contemporaries. From his published letters one can easily compile an impressive list of the writers whom he helped with encouragement or influence. Here are some of them: Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, Madison Cawein, Henry George, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Frank Norris, Brand Whitlock, Henry B. Fuller, Robert Herrick, Clyde Fitch, Will N. Harben, Booth Tarkington, and Joyce Kilmer. Among the names which one misses here is that of Theodore Dreiser, a champion of that extreme form of realism known as naturalism. Was it Dreiser's preoccupation with sex that kept Howells from admiring the former's early work, or rather Dreiser's artistic clumsiness? At any rate, Howells's distaste for the modern treatment of

sex did not prevent him from doing his best to persuade New York publishers that they ought to print Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

The reaction against Howells has gone very far. In *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, published in the year of the novelist's death, Van Wyck Brooks expressed the conviction that Howells was one of the forces which prevented Mark Twain from becoming the Jonathan Swift of American literature. He says: "And in this man of marvelous talent, this darling of all the gods and all the graces, he [Mark Twain] had encountered once more the eternal, universal, instinctive American subservience to what Mr. Santayana calls 'the genteel tradition.'" In *New England: Indian Summer* (1940) Brooks portrayed Howells much more sympathetically. John Macy, who has high praise for Howells's style, sees him as in youth a man of great gifts who "was stricken by the Dead Hand in Literature." "He became the Dean of American Letters," continues Macy, "and there was no one else on the Faculty." "The grand passions, sexual or other, he does not draw and seldom attempts to draw; therefore he has never written a great novel." And yet, Macy admits, "Within his limits he is a perfect artist. His slender comedies are without a blemish. He never wrote a bad page, never wrote a sentence that any one else could make better."

Some of Howells's books are autobiographical in character: *A Boy's Town* (1890), *My Literary Passions* (1895), *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900), *My Mark Twain* (1900), and *Years of My Youth* (1916). His daughter, Mildred Howells, has edited the *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells* (1928) in two volumes. See also D. G. Cooke, *William Dean Howells: A Critical Study* (1922); O. W. Firkins, *William Dean Howells: A Study* (1924); Herbert Edwards, "Howells and the Controversy over Realism in American Fiction," *American Literature*, III, 237-248 (November, 1931); and Walter Fuller Taylor's two articles in the same periodical: "On the Origin of Howells's Interest in Economic Reform," II, 3-14 (March, 1930), and "William Dean Howells and the Economic Novel," IV, 103-113 (May, 1932). See also Taylor's *The Economic Novel in America* (1940) and Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947). Howells often appears in *Mark Twain's Letters* (1917) and *The Letters of Henry James* (1920). There is an excellent bibliography by George Arms and William Gibson (1947). There is, unfortunately, no collected edition of Howells's works, but some of them are still in print.

from CRITICISM AND FICTION*
(1891)

In the 'eighties and the 'nineties there was considerable discussion of the art of fiction by writers of fiction. The selection from Howells should be considered in connection with Henry James's "The Art

of Fiction," Brander Matthews's "The Philosophy of the Short-Story," Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen's "The American Novelist and His Public," Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Gossip on Romance" and "A Humble Remonstrance" (an attack on Howells), and other essays on fiction written in the same period.

XVIII

In General Grant's confession of novel-reading there is sort of inference that he had wasted his time, or else the guilty conscience of the novelist

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in me imagines such an inference. But however this may be, there is certainly no question concerning the intention of a correspondent who once wrote to me after reading some rather bragging claims I had made for fiction as a mental and moral means. "I have very grave doubts," he said, "as to the whole list of magnificent things that you seem to think novels have done for the race, and can witness in myself many evil things which they have done for me. Whatever in my mental make-up is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious, I can trace to the perusal of some work of fiction. Worse than that, they beget such high-strung and supersensitive ideas of life that plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised, and matter-of-fact poverty, or everyday, commonplace distress, meets with no sympathy, if indeed noticed at all, by one who has wept over the impossibly accumulated sufferings of some gaudy hero or heroine."

I am not sure that I had the controversy with this correspondent that he seemed to suppose; but novels are now so fully accepted by every one pretending to cultivated taste—and they really form the whole intellectual life of such immense numbers of people, without question of their influence, good or bad, upon the mind—that it is refreshing to have them frankly denounced, and to be invited to revise one's ideas and feelings in regard to them. A little honesty, or a great deal of honesty, in this quest will do the novel, as we hope yet to have it, and as we have already begun to have it, no harm; and for my own part I will confess that I believe fiction in the past to have been largely injurious, as I believe the stage play to be still almost wholly injurious, through its falsehood, its folly, its wantonness, and its aimlessness. It may be safely assumed that most of the novel-reading which people fancy an intellectual pastime is the emptiest dissipation, hardly more related to thought or the wholesome exercise of the mental faculties than opium-eating; in either case the brain is drugged, and left weaker and crazier for the debauch. If this may be called the negative result of the fiction habit, the positive injury that most novels work is by no means so easily to be measured in the case of young men whose character they help so much to form or deform, and the women of all ages whom they keep so much in ignorance of the world they mis-

represent. Grown men have little harm from them, but in the other cases, which are the vast majority, they hurt because they are not true—not because they are malevolent, but because they are idle lies about human nature and the social fabric, which it behooves us to know and to understand, that we may deal justly with ourselves and with one another. One need not go so far as our correspondent, and trace to the fiction habit "whatever is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious," in one's life; bad as the fiction habit is it is probably not responsible for the whole sum of evil in its victims, and I believe that if the reader will use care in choosing from this fungus-growth with which the fields of literature teem every day, he may nourish himself as with the true mushroom, at no risk from the poisonous species.

The tests are very plain and simple, and they are perfectly infallible. If a novel flatters the passions, and exalts them above the principles, it is poisonous; it may not kill, but it will certainly injure; and this test will alone exclude an entire class of fiction, of which eminent examples will occur to all. Then the whole spawn of so-called unmoral romances, which imagine a world where the sins of sense are unvisited by the penalties following, swift or slow, but inexorably sure, in the real world, are deadly poison: these do kill. The novels that merely tickle our prejudices and lull our judgment, or that coddle our sensibilities or pamper our gross appetite for the marvellous, are not so fatal, but they are innutritious, and clog the soul with unwholesome vapors of all kinds. No doubt they too help to weaken the moral fibre, and make their readers indifferent to "plodding perseverance and plain industry," and to "matter-of-fact poverty and commonplace distress."

Without taking them too seriously, it still must be owned that the "gaudy hero and heroine" are to blame for a great deal of harm in the world. That heroine long taught by example, if not precept, that Love, or the passion or fancy she mistook for it, was the chief interest of a life, which is really concerned with a great many other things; that it was lasting in the way she knew it; that it was worthy of every sacrifice, and was altogether a finer thing than prudence, obedience, reason; that love alone was glorious and beautiful, and these were mean and ugly in comparison with it. More lately she has begun

to idolize and illustrate Duty, and she is hardly less mischievous in this new role, opposing duty, as she did love, to prudence, obedience, and reason. The stock hero, whom, if we met him, we could not fail to see was a most deplorable person, has undoubtedly imposed himself upon the victims of the fiction habit as admirable. With him, too, love was and is the great affair, whether in its old romantic phase of chivalrous achievement or manifold suffering for love's sake, or its more recent development of the "virile," the bullying, and the brutal, or its still more recent agonies of self-sacrifice, as idle and useless as the moral experiences of the insane asylums. With his vain posturings and his ridiculous splendor he is really a painted barbarian, the prey of his passions and his delusions, full of obsolete ideals, and the motives and ethics of a savage, which the guilty author of his being does his best—or his worst—in spite of his own light and knowledge, to foist upon the reader as something generous and noble. I am not merely bringing this charge against that sort of fiction which is beneath literature and outside of it, "the shoreless lakes of ditch-water," whose miasms fill the air below the empyrean where the great ones sit; but I am accusing the work of some of the most famous, who have, in this instance or in that, sinned against the truth, which can alone exalt and purify men. I do not say that they have constantly done so, or even commonly done so; but that they have done so at all marks them as of the past, to be read with the due historical allowance for their epoch and their conditions. For I believe that, while inferior writers will and must continue to imitate them in their foibles and their errors, no one hereafter will be able to achieve greatness who is false to humanity, either in its facts or its duties. The light of civilization has already broken even upon the novel, and no conscientious man can now set about painting an image of life without perpetual question of the verity of his work, and without feeling bound to distinguish so clearly that no reader of his may be misled, between what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is health and what is perdition, in the actions and the characters he portrays.

The fiction that aims merely to entertain—the fiction that is to serious fiction as the opera-bouffe, the ballet, and the pantomime are to the

true drama—need not feel the burden of this obligation so deeply; but even such fiction will not be gay or trivial to any reader's hurt, and criticism will hold it to account if it passes from painting to teaching folly.

More and more not only the criticism which prints its opinions, but the infinitely vaster and powerfuller criticism which thinks and feels them merely, will make this demand. I confess that I do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, Is it true?—true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women? This truth, which necessarily includes the highest morality and the highest artistry—this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak; and without it all graces of style and feats of invention and cunning of construction are so many superfluities of naughtiness. It is well for the truth to have all these, and shine in them, but for falsehood they are merely meretricious, the bedizenment of the wanton; they atone for nothing, they count for nothing. But in fact they come naturally of truth, and grace it without solicitation; they are added unto it. In the whole range of fiction we know of no true picture of life—that is, of human nature—which is not also a masterpiece of literature, full of divine and natural beauty. It may have no touch or tint of this special civilization or of that; it had better have this local color well ascertained; but the truth is deeper and finer than aspects, and if the book is true to what men and women know of one another's souls it will be true enough, and it will be great and beautiful. It is the conception of literature as something apart from life, superfinely aloof, which makes it really unimportant to the great mass of mankind, without a message or a meaning for them; and it is the notion that a novel may be false in its portrayal of causes and effects that makes literary art contemptible even to those whom it amuses, that forbids them to regard the novelist as a serious or right-minded person. If they do not in some moment of indignation cry out against all novels, as my correspondent does, they remain besotted in the fume of the delusions purveyed to them, with no higher feeling for the author than such maudlin affection as the habitué of an opium-joint perhaps knows for the attendant who fills his pipe with the drug.

Or, as in the case of another correspondent who writes that in his youth he "read a great many novels, but always regarded it as an amusement, like horse-racing and card-playing," for which he had no time when he entered upon the serious business of life, it renders them merely contemptuous. His view of the matter may be commended to the brotherhood and sisterhood of novelists as full of wholesome if bitter suggestion; and we urge them not to dismiss it with high literary scorn as that of some Boeotian dull to the beauty of art. Refuse it as we may, it is still the feeling of the vast majority of people for whom life is earnest, and who find only a distorted and misleading likeness of it in our books. We may fold ourselves in our scholars' gowns, and close the doors of our studies, and affect to despise this rude voice; but we cannot shut it out. It comes to us from wherever men are at work, from wherever they are truly living, and accuses us of unfaithfulness, of triviality, of mere stage-play; and none of us can escape conviction except he prove himself worthy of his time—a time in which the great masters have brought literature back to life, and filled its ebbing veins with the red tides of reality. We cannot all equal them; we need to copy them; but we can all go to the sources of their inspiration and their power; and to draw from these no one need go far—no one need really go out of himself.

Fifty years ago, Carlyle, in whom the truth was always alive, but in whom it was then unperverted by suffering, by celebrity, and by despair, wrote in his study of Diderot: "Were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel-writers and such like must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things; either retire into the nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake themselves with such facility as they have to understand and record what is true, of which surely there is, and will forever be, a whole infinitude unknown to us of infinite importance to us? Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons), Reality."

If, after half a century, fiction still mainly works for "children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes," it is nevertheless one of

the hopefulest signs of the world's progress that it has begun to work for "grown persons," and if not exactly in the way that Carlyle might have solely intended in urging its writers to compile memoirs instead of building the "novel-fabric," still it has, in the highest and widest sense, already made Reality its Romance. I cannot judge it, I do not even care for it, except as it has done this; and I can hardly conceive of a literary self-respect in these days compatible with the old trade of make-believe, with the production of the kind of fiction which is too much honored by classification with card-playing and horse-racing. But let fiction cease to lie about life; let it portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know; let it leave off painting dolls and working them by springs and wires; let it show the different interests in their true proportions; let it forbear to preach pride and revenge, folly and insanity, egotism and prejudice, but frankly own these for what they are, in whatever figures and occasions they appear; let it not put on fine literary airs; let it speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know—the language of unaffected people everywhere—and there can be no doubt of an unlimited future, not only of delightfulness but of usefulness, for it.

XXI

--- I am not sure that the Americans have not brought the short story nearer perfection in the all-round sense than almost any other people, and for reasons very simple and near at hand. It might be argued from the national hurry and impatience that it was a literary form peculiarly adapted to the American temperament, but I suspect that its extraordinary development among us is owing much more to more tangible facts. The success of American magazines, which is nothing less than prodigious, is only commensurate with their excellence. Their sort of success is not only from the courage to decide what ought to please, but from the knowledge of what does please; and it is probable that, aside from the pictures, it is the short stories which please the readers of our best magazines. The serial novels they must have, of course; but rather more of course they must have short stories, and by operation of the law of supply and demand, the short stories, abundant in quantity

and excellent in quality, are forthcoming because they are wanted. By another operation of the same law, which political economists have more recently taken account of, the demand follows the supply, and short stories are sought for because there is a proven ability to furnish them, and people read them willingly because they are usually very good. The art of writing them is now so disciplined and diffused with us that there is no lack either for the magazines or for the newspaper "syndicates" which deal in them almost to the exclusion of the serials. In other countries the feuilleton of the journals is a novel continued from day to day, but with us the papers, whether daily or weekly, now more rarely print novels, whether they get them at first hand from the writers, as a great many do, or through the syndicates, which purvey a vast variety of literary wares, chiefly for the Sunday editions of the city journals. In the country papers the short story takes the place of the chapters of a serial which used to be given.

XXII

In fine, I would have our American novelists be as American as they unconsciously can. Matthew Arnold complained that he found no "distinction" in our life,¹ and I would gladly persuade all artists intending greatness in any kind among us that the recognition of the fact pointed out by Mr. Arnold ought to be a source of inspiration to them, and not discouragement. We have been now some hundred years building up a state on the affirmation of the essential equality of men in their rights and duties, and whether we have been right or been wrong the gods have taken us at our word, and have responded to us with a civilization in which there is no "distinction" perceptible to the eye that loves and values it. Such beauty and such grandeur as we have is common beauty, common grandeur, or the beauty and grandeur in which the quality of solidarity so prevails that neither distinguishes itself to the disadvantage of anything else. It seems to me that these conditions invite the artist to the study and the appreciation of the common, and to the portrayal in every art of those finer and higher aspects which unite rather than sever humanity, if he would thrive in our new order of things. The talent that is robust enough to front the every-day world and

catch the charm of its work-worn, care-worn, brave, kindly face, need not fear the encounter, though it seems terrible to the sort nurtured in the superstition of the romantic, the bizarre, the heroic, the distinguished, as the things alone worthy of painting or carving or writing. The arts must become democratic, and then we shall have the expression of America in art; and the reproach which Mr. Arnold was half right in making us shall have no justice in it any longer; we shall be "distinguished."

XXIII

If I were authorized to address any word directly to our novelists I should say, Do not trouble yourselves about standards or ideals; but try to be faithful and natural: remember that there is no greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth to your own knowledge of things; and keep on working, even if your work is not long remembered.

At least three-fifths of the literature called classic, in all languages, no more lives than the poems and stories that perish monthly in our magazines. It is all printed and reprinted, generation after generation, century after century, but it is not alive; it is as dead as the people who wrote it and read it, and to whom it meant something, perhaps; with whom it was a fashion, a caprice, a passing taste. A superstitious piety preserves it, and pretends that it has æsthetic qualities which can delight or edify; but nobody really enjoys it, except as a reflection of the past moods and humors of the race, or a revelation of the author's character; otherwise it is trash, and often very filthy trash, which the present trash generally is not.

XXIV

One of the great newspapers the other day invited the prominent American authors to speak their minds upon a point in the theory and practice of fiction which had already vexed some of them. It was the question of how much or how little the American novel ought to deal with certain facts of life which are not usually talked of before young people, and especially young ladies. Of course the question was not decided, and I forget just how far the balance inclined in favor of a larger freedom in the matter. But it certainly inclined that way; one or two writers of the sex which is somehow sup-

¹ In *Civilization in the United States* (1888).

posed to have purity in its keeping (as if purity were a thing that did not practically concern the other sex, preoccupied with serious affairs) gave it a rather vigorous tilt to that side. In view of this fact it would not be the part of prudence to make an effort to dress the balance; and indeed I do not know that I was going to make any such effort. But there are some things to say, around and about the subject, which I should like to have some one else say, and which I may myself possibly be safe in suggesting.

One of the first of these is the fact, generally lost sight of by those who censure the Anglo-Saxon novel for its prudishness, that it is really not such a prude after all; and that if it is sometimes apparently anxious to avoid those experiences of life not spoken of before young people, this may be an appearance only. Sometimes a novel which has this shuffling air, this effect of truckling to propriety, might defend itself, if it could speak for itself, by saying that such experiences happened not to come within its scheme, and that, so far from maiming or mutilating itself in ignoring them, it was all the more faithfully representative of the tone of modern life in dealing with love that was chaste, and with passion so honest that it could be openly spoken of before the tenderest society bud at dinner. It might say that the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the extreme flirtation even, was the exceptional thing in life, and unless the scheme of the story necessarily involved it, that it would be bad art to lug it in, and as bad taste as to introduce such topics in a mixed company. It could say very justly that the novel in our civilization now always addresses a mixed company, and that the vast majority of the company are ladies, and that very many, if not most, of these ladies are young girls. If the novel were written for men and for married women alone, as in continental Europe, it might be altogether different. But the simple fact is that it is not written for them alone among us, and it is a question of writing, under cover of our universal acceptance, things for young girls to read which you would be put out-of-doors for saying to them, or frankly giving notice of your intention, and so cutting yourself off from the pleasure—and it is a very high and sweet one—of appealing to these vivid, responsive intelligences, which are none the less brilliant and admirable because they are innocent.

One day a novelist who liked, after the manner of other men, to repine at his hard fate, complained to his friend, a critic, that he was tired of the restriction he had put upon himself in this regard; for it is a mistake, as can be readily shown, to suppose that others impose it. "See how free those French fellows are!" he rebelled. "Shall we always be shut up to our tradition of decency?"

"Do you think it's much worse than being shut up to their tradition of indecency?" said his friend.

Then that novelist began to reflect, and he remembered how sick the invariable motive of the French novel made him. He perceived finally that, convention for convention, ours was not only more tolerable, but on the whole was truer to life, not only to its complexion, but also to its texture. No one will pretend that there is not vicious love beneath the surface of our society; if he did, the fetid explosions of the divorce trials would refute him; but if he pretended that it was in any just sense characteristic of our society, he could be still more easily refuted. Yet it exists, and it is unquestionably the material of tragedy, the stuff from which intense effects are wrought. The question, after owning this fact, is whether these intense effects are not rather cheap effects. I incline to think they are, and I will try to say why I think so, if I may do so without offence. The material itself, the mere mention of it, has an instant fascination; it arrests, it detains, till the last word is said, and while there is anything to be hinted. This is what makes a love intrigue of some sort all but essential to the popularity of any fiction. Without such an intrigue the intellectual equipment of the author must be of the highest, and then he will succeed only with the highest class of readers. But any author who will deal with a guilty love intrigue holds all readers in his hand, the highest with the lowest, as long as he hints the slightest hope of the smallest potential naughtiness. He need not at all be a great author; he may be a very shabby wretch, if he has but the courage or the trick of that sort of thing. The critics will call him "virile" and "passionate"; decent people will be ashamed to have been limed by him; but the low average will only ask another chance of flocking into his net. If he happens to be an able writer, his really fine and costly work will be unheeded, and the lure to the appetite will be

chiefly remembered. There may be other qualities which make reputations for other men, but in his case they will count for nothing. He pays this penalty for his success in that kind; and every one pays some such penalty who deals with some such material. It attaches in like manner to the triumphs of the writers who now almost form a school among us, and who may be said to have established themselves in an easy popularity simply by the study of erotic shivers and fervors. They may find their account in the popularity, or they may not; there is no question of the popularity.

But I do not mean to imply that their case covers the whole ground. So far as it goes, though, it ought to stop the mouths of those who complain that fiction is enslaved to propriety among us. It appears that of a certain kind of impropriety it is free to give us all it will, and more. But this is not what serious men and women writing fiction mean when they rebel against the limitations of their art in our civilization. They have no desire to deal with nakedness, as painters and sculptors freely do in the worship of beauty; or with certain facts of life, as the stage does, in the service of sensation. But they ask why, when the conventions of the plastic and histrionic arts liberate their followers to the portrayal of almost any phase of the physical or of the emotional nature, an American novelist may not write a story on the lines of Anna Karenina or Madame Bovary. Sappho they put aside, and from Zola's work they avert their eyes. They do not condemn him or Daudet, necessarily, or accuse their motives; they leave them out of the question; they do not want to do that kind of thing. But they do sometimes wish to do another kind, to touch one of the most serious and sorrowful problems of life in the spirit of Tolstoi and Flaubert, and they ask why they may not. At one time, they remind us, the Anglo-Saxon novelist did deal with such problems—De Foe in his spirit, Richardson in his, Goldsmith in his. At what moment did our fiction lose this privilege? In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?

Whether I wished to oppose them in their aspiration for greater freedom, or whether I wished to encourage them, I should begin to answer them by saying that the Young Girl had

never done anything of the kind. The manners of the novel have been improving with those of its readers; that is all. Gentlemen no longer swear or fall drunk under the table, or abduct young ladies and shut them in lonely country-houses, or so habitually set about the ruin of their neighbors' wives, as they once did. Generally, people now call a spade an agricultural implement; they have not grown decent without having also grown a little squeamish, but they have grown comparatively decent; there is no doubt about that. They require of a novelist whom they respect unquestionable proof of his seriousness, if he proposes to deal with certain phases of life; they require a sort of scientific decorum. He can no longer expect to be received on the ground of entertainment only; he assumes a higher function, something like that of a physician or a priest, and they expect him to be bound by laws as sacred as those of such professions; they hold him solemnly pledged not to betray them or abuse their confidence. If he will accept the conditions, they give him their confidence, and he may then treat to his greater honor, and not at all to his disadvantage, of such experiences, such relations of men and women as George Eliot treats in *Adam Bede*, in *Daniel Deronda*, in *Romola*, in almost all her books; such as Hawthorne treats in the *Scarlet Letter*; such as Dickens treats in *David Copperfield*; such as Thackeray treats in *Pendennis*, and glances at in every one of his fictions; such as most of the masters of English fiction have at some time treated more or less openly. It is quite false or quite mistaken to suppose that our novels have left untouched these most important realities of life. They have not only made them their stock in trade; they have kept a true perspective in regard to them; they have relegated them in their pictures of life to the space and place they occupy in life itself, as we know it in England and America. They have kept a correct proportion, knowing perfectly well that unless the novel is to be a map, with everything scrupulously laid down in it, a faithful record of life in far the greater extent could be made to the exclusion of guilty love and all its circumstances and consequences.

I justify them in this view not only because I hate what is cheap and meretricious, and hold in peculiar loathing the cant of the critics who require "passion" as something in itself admir-

able and desirable in a novel, but because I prize fidelity in the historian of feeling and character. Most of these critics who demand "passion" would seem to have no conception of any passion but one. Yet there are several other passions: the passion of grief, the passion of avarice, the passion of pity, the passion of ambition, the passion of hate, the passion of envy, the passion of devotion, the passion of friendship; and all these have a greater part in the drama of life than the passion of love, and infinitely greater than the passion of guilty love. Wittingly or unwittingly, English fiction and American fiction have recognized this truth, not fully, not in the measure it merits, but in greater degree than most other fictions.

XXV

Who can deny that fiction would be incomparably stronger, incomparably truer, if once it could tear off the habit which enslaves it to the celebration chiefly of a single passion, in one phase or another, and could frankly dedicate itself to the service of all the passions, all the interests, all the facts? Every novelist who has thought about his art knows that it would, and I think that upon reflection he must doubt whether his sphere would be greatly enlarged if he were allowed to treat freely the darker aspects of the favorite passion. But, as I have shown, the privilege, the right to do this, is already perfectly recognized. This is proved again by the fact that serious criticism recognizes as master-works (I will not push the question of supremacy) the two great novels which above all others have moved the world by their study of guilty love. If by any chance, if by some prodigious miracle, any American should now arise to treat it on the level of *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*, he would be absolutely sure of success, and of fame and gratitude as great as those books have won for their authors.

But what editor of what American magazine would print such a story?

Certainly I do not think any one would; and here our novelist must again submit to conditions. If he wishes to publish such a story (supposing him to have once written it), he must publish it as a book. A book is something by itself, responsible for its character, which becomes quickly known, and it does not necessarily penetrate to every member of the household.

The father or the mother may say to the child, "I would rather you wouldn't read that book"; if the child cannot be trusted, the book may be locked up. But with the magazine and its serial the affair is different. Between the editor of a reputable English or American magazine and the families which receive it there is a tacit agreement that he will print nothing which a father may not read to his daughter, or safely leave her to read herself. After all, it is a matter of business; and the insurgent novelist should consider the situation with coolness and common-sense. The editor did not create the situation; but it exists, and he could not even attempt to change it without many sorts of disaster. He respects it, therefore, with the good faith of an honest man. Even when he is himself a novelist, with ardor for his art and impatience of the limitations put upon it, he interposes his veto, as Thackeray did in the case of Trollope when a contributor approaches forbidden ground.

It does not avail to say that the daily papers teem with facts far fouler and deadlier than any which fiction could imagine. That is true, but it is true also that the sex which reads the most novels reads the fewest newspapers; and, besides, the reporter does not command the novelist's skill to fix impressions in a young girl's mind or to suggest conjecture. The magazine is a little despotic, a little arbitrary; but unquestionably its favor is essential to success, and its conditions are not such narrow ones. You cannot deal with Tolstoi's and Flaubert's subjects in the absolute artistic freedom of Tolstoi and Flaubert; since De Foe, that is unknown among us; but if you deal with them in the manner of George Eliot, of Thackeray, of Dickens, of society, you may deal with them even in the magazines. There is no other restriction upon you. All the horrors and miseries and tortures are open to you; your pages may drop blood; sometimes it may happen that the editor will even exact such strong material from you. But probably he will require nothing but the observance of the convention in question; and if you do not yourself prefer bloodshed he will leave you free to use all sweet and peaceable means of interesting his readers.

Believe me, it is no narrow field he throws open to you, with that little sign to keep off the grass up at one point only. Its vastness is still almost unexplored, and whole regions in it are unknown to the fictionist. Dig anywhere, and

do but dig deep enough, and you strike riches; or, if you are of the mind to range, the gentler climes, the softer temperatures, the serener skies, are all free to you, and are so little visited that the chance of novelty is greater among them.

from A TRAVELER FROM ALTRURIA*

(1894)

Mr. Twelvemough (the narrator), a popular novelist, has taken to a New England summer resort in the hill country Mr. Aristides Homos, a visitor from Altruria, an ideal commonwealth reminiscent of More's *Utopia* and other books of that type. Various men and women of the wealthy class try to explain to the Altrurian the intricacies of American social and economic life. Mrs. Makely is the wife of a wealthy business man. *A Traveler from Altruria* shows the influence upon Howells's thinking of Henry George, Edward Bellamy, William Morris, and Tolstoy.

from CHAPTER V

"There is one thing I should like to ask you, too, Mr. Homos. Is it true that everybody in Altruria does some kind of manual labor?"

"Why, certainly," he answered, quite as if he had been an American.

"Ladies, too? Or perhaps you have none!"

I thought this rather offensive, but I could not see that the Altrurian had taken it ill. "Perhaps we had better try to understand each other clearly before I answer that question. You have no titles of nobility as they have in England"—

"No, indeed! I hope we have outgrown those superstitions," said Mrs. Makely, with a republican fervor that did my heart good. "It is a word that we apply first of all to the moral qualities of a person."

"But you said just now that you sometimes forgot that your sempstress was not a lady. Just what did you mean by that?"

Mrs. Makely hesitated. "I meant—I suppose I meant—that she had not the surroundings of a lady; the social traditions."

"Then it has something to do with social as well as moral qualities—with ranks and classes?"

"Classes, yes; but as you know, we have no ranks in America." The Altrurian took off his hat and rubbed an imaginable perspiration from his forehead. He sighed deeply. "It is all very difficult."

"Yes," Mrs. Makely assented, "I suppose it is. All foreigners find it so. In fact it is something that you have to live into the notion of; it can't be explained."

"Well, then, my dear madam, will you tell me without further question, what you understand by a lady, and let me live into the notion of it at my leisure?"

"I will do my best," said Mrs. Makely. "But it would be so much easier to tell you *who* was or who was not a lady! However, your acquaintance is so limited yet, that I must try to do something in the abstract and impersonal for you. In the first place, a lady must be above the sordid anxieties in every way. She need not be very rich, but she must have enough, so that she need not be harassed about making both ends meet, when she ought to be devoting herself to her social duties. The time is passed with us when a lady could look after the dinner, and perhaps cook part of it herself, and then rush in to receive her guests, and do the amenities. She must have a certain kind of house, so that her entourage won't seem cramped and mean, and she must have nice frocks, of course, and plenty of them. She needn't be of the smart set; that isn't at all necessary; but she can't afford to be out of the fashion. Of course she must have a certain training. She must have cultivated tastes; she must know about art, and literature, and music, and all those kind of things, and though it isn't necessary to go in for anything in particular, it won't hurt her to have a fad or two. The nicest kind of fad is charity; and people go in for that a great deal. I think sometimes they use it to work up with, and there are some who use religion in the same way; I think it's horrid; but it's perfectly safe; you can't accuse them of doing it. I'm happy to say, though, that mere church association doesn't count socially so much as it used to. Charity is a great deal more insidious. But you see how hard it is to define a lady. So much has to be left to the nerves, in all these things! And then it's changing all the time; Europe's coming in, and the old American ideals are passing away. Things that people did ten years ago would be impossible now, or at least

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ridiculous. You wouldn't be considered vulgar, quite, but you would certainly be considered a back number, and that's almost as bad. Really," said Mrs. Makely, "I don't believe I can tell you what a lady is."

We all laughed together at her frank confession. The Altrurian asked, "But do I understand that one of her conditions is that she shall have nothing whatever to do?"

"Nothing to *do*!" cried Mrs. Makely. "A lady is busy from morning till night! She always goes to bed perfectly worn out."

"But with what?" asked the Altrurian.

"With making herself agreeable and her house attractive, with going to lunches, and teas, and dinners, and concerts, and theatres, and art exhibitions, and charity meetings, and receptions, and with accepting and declining, and giving lunches and dinners, and making calls and receiving them, and I don't know what all. It's the most hideous slavery!" Her voice rose into something like a shriek; one could see that her nerves were going at the mere thought of it all. "You don't have a moment to yourself; your life isn't your own!"

"But the lady isn't allowed to do any useful kind of work?"

"*Work!* Don't you call that work, and *useful*? I'm sure I envy the cook in my kitchen at times; I envy the woman that scrubs my floors. Stop! Don't ask why I don't go into my kitchen, or get down on my knees with the mop! It isn't possible! You simply can't! Perhaps you could if you were very *grand dame*, but if you're anywhere near the line of necessity, or ever have been, you can't. Besides, if we did do our own household work, as I understand your Altrurian ladies do, what would become of the servant class? We should be taking away their living, and that would be wicked."

"It would certainly be wrong to take away the living of a fellow-creature," the Altrurian gravely admitted, "and I see the obstacle in your way."

"It's a mountain," said the lady, with exhaustion in her voice, but a returning amiability; his forbearance must have placated her.

"May I ask what the use of your society life is?" he ventured after a moment.

"Use? Why should it have any? It kills time."

"Then you are shut up to a hideous slavery without use, except to kill time, and you cannot escape from it without taking away the living of those dependant on you?"

"Yes," I put in, "and that is a difficulty that meets us at every turn. It is something that Matthew Arnold urged with great effect in his paper on that crank of a Tolstoy. He asked what would become of the people who need the work, if we served and waited on ourselves, as Tolstoy preached. The question is unanswerable."

"That is true; in your conditions, it is unanswerable," said the Altrurian.

"I think," said Mrs. Makely, "that under the circumstances we do pretty well."

"Oh, I don't presume to censure you. And if you believe that your conditions are the best"—

"We believe them the best in the best of all possible worlds," I said devoutly; and it struck me that if ever we came to have a national church, some such affirmation as that concerning our economical conditions ought to be in the confession of faith.

The Altrurian's mind had not followed mine so far. "And your young girls?" he asked of Mrs. Makely, "how is their time occupied?"

"You mean after they come out in society?"

"I suppose so."

She seemed to reflect. "I don't know that it is very differently occupied. Of course, they have their own amusements; they have their dances, and little clubs, and their sewing societies. I suppose that even an Altrurian would applaud their sewing for the poor?" Mrs. Makely asked rather satirically.

"Yes," he answered; and then he asked, "Isn't it taking work away from some needy sempstress, though? But I suppose you excuse it to the thoughtlessness of youth."

Mrs. Makely did not say, and he went on: "What I find it so hard to understand is how you ladies can endure a life of mere nervous exertion, such as you have been describing to me. I don't see how you keep well."

"We *don't* keep well," said Mrs. Makely, with the greatest amusement. "I don't suppose that when you get above the working classes, till you reach the very rich, you would find a perfectly well woman in America." - - -

from CHAPTER IX

"So you admit then," said the professor, "that the higher education elevates a business man's standard of morals?"

"Undoubtedly. That is one of its chief drawbacks," said the banker, with a laugh.

"Well," I said, with the deference due even

to a man who had only a million or two, more or less, "we must allow *you* to say such things. But if the case is so bad with the business men who have made the great fortunes—the business men who have never had the disadvantage of a university education—I wish you would explain to Mr. Homos why, in every public exigency, we instinctively appeal to the business sense of the community, as if it were the fountain of wisdom, probity and equity. Suppose there were some question of vital interest—I won't say financial, but political, or moral, or social—on which it was necessary to rouse public opinion; what would be the first thing to do? To call a meeting, over the signatures of the leading business men; because no other names appeal with such force to the public. You might get up a call signed by all the novelists, artists, ministers, lawyers and doctors in the state, and it would not have a tithe of the effect, with the people at large, that a call signed by a few leading merchants, bank presidents, railroad men and trust officers, would have. What is the reason? It seems strange that I should be asking you to defend yourself against yourself."

"Not at all, my dear fellow, not at all!" the banker replied, with his caressing bonhomie. "Though I will confess, to begin with, that I do not expect to answer your question to your entire satisfaction. I can only do my best—on the installment plan."

He turned to the Altrurian, and then went on:

"As I said the other night, this is a business man's country. We are a purely commercial people; money is absolutely to the fore; and business, which is the means of getting the most money, is the American fetish; I don't mind calling it so myself. The fact that business is our ideal, or our fetish, will account for the popular faith in business men, who form its priesthood, its hierarchy. I don't know, myself, any other reason for regarding business men as solidier than novelists, artists, or ministers, not to mention lawyers and doctors. They are supposed to have long heads; but it appears that ninety-five times out of a hundred they haven't. They are supposed to be very reliable; but it is almost invariably a business man, of some sort, who gets out to Canada while the state examiner is balancing his books, and it is usually the longest-headed business men who get plundered by him. No, it is simply because business is our national ideal, that the business man is honored above all

other men among us. In the aristocratic countries they forward a public object under the patronage of the nobility and gentry; in a plutocratic country they get the business men to endorse it. I suppose that the average American citizen feels that they wouldn't endorse a thing unless it was safe; and the average American citizen likes to be safe—he is cautious. As a matter of fact, business men are always taking risks, and business is a game of chance, in a certain degree. Have I made myself intelligible?"

"Entirely so," said the Altrurian; and he seemed so thoroughly well satisfied, that he forbore asking any question farther.

No one else spoke. The banker lighted a cigar, and resumed at the point where he left off when I ventured to enter upon the defense of his class with him. I must say that he had not convinced me at all. At that moment, I would rather have trusted him, in any serious matter of practical concern, than all the novelists I ever heard of. But I thought I would leave the word to him, without further attempt to reinstate him in his self-esteem. In fact, he seemed to be getting along very well without it; or else he was feeling that mysterious control from the Altrurian which I had already suspected him of using. Voluntarily or involuntarily, the banker proceeded with his contribution to the Altrurian's stock of knowledge concerning our civilization.

"I don't believe, however, that the higher education is any more of a failure, as a provision for a business career, than the lower education is for the life of labor. I suppose that the hypercritical observer might say that in a wholly commercial civilization, like ours, the business man really needed nothing beyond the three R's, and the workingman needed no R at all. As a practical affair, there is a good deal to be said in favor of that view. The higher education is part of the social ideal which we have derived from the past, from Europe. It is part of the provision for the life of leisure, the life of the aristocrat, which nobody of our generation leads, except women. Our women really have some use for the education of a gentleman, but our men have none. How will that do for a generalization?" the banker asked of me.

"Oh," I admitted, with a laugh, "It is a good deal like one of my own. I have always been struck with that phase of our civilization."

"Well, then," the banker resumed, "take the lower education. This is part of the civic ideal

which, I suppose, I may say we evolved from the depths of our inner consciousness of what an American citizen ought to be. It includes instruction in all the R's, and in several other letters of the alphabet. It is given free by the state, and no one can deny that it is thoroughly socialistic in conception and application."

"Distinctly so," said the professor. "Now that the text-books are furnished by the state, we have only to go a step farther, and provide a good, hot lunch for the children every day, as they do in Paris."

"Well," the banker returned, "I don't know that I should have much to say against that. It seems as reasonable as anything in the system of education which we force upon the working-classes. *They* know, perfectly well, whether we do or not, that the three R's will not make their children better mechanics or laborers, and that, if the fight for a mere living is to go on, from generation to generation, they will have no leisure to apply the little learning they get in the public schools for their personal culture. In the meantime, we deprive the parents of their children's labor, in order that they may be better citizens for their schooling, as we imagine; I don't know whether they are or not. We offer them no sort of compensation for their time, and I think we ought to feel obliged to them for not wanting wages for their children while we are teaching them to be better citizens."

"You know," said the professor, "that has been suggested by some of their leaders."

"No, really? Well, that is *too* good!" The banker threw back his head, and roared, and we all laughed with him. When we had sobered down again, he said "I suppose that when a working man makes all the use he can of his lower education, he becomes a business man, and then he doesn't need the higher. Professor, you seem to be left out in the cold, by our system, whichever way you take it."

"Oh," said the professor, "the law of supply and demand works both ways; it creates the demand, if the supply comes first; and if we keep on giving the sons of business men the education of a gentleman, we may yet make them feel the need of it. We shall evolve a new sort of business man."

"The sort that can't make money, or wouldn't exactly like to, on some terms?" asked the banker. "Well, perhaps we shall work out our democratic

salvation in that way. When you have educated your new business man to the point where he can't consent to get rich at the obvious cost of others, you've got him on the way back to work with his hands. He will sink into the ranks of labor, and give the fellow with the lower education a chance. I've no doubt he'll take it. I don't know but you're right, professor."

The lawyer had not spoken, as yet. Now he said: "Then, it is education, after all, that is to bridge the chasm between the classes and the masses, though it seems destined to go a long way around about it. There was a time, I believe, when we expected religion to do that."

"Well, it may still be doing it, for all I know," said the banker. "What do you say?" he asked, turning to the minister. "You ought to be able to give us some statistics on the subject with that large congregation of yours. You preach to more people than any other pulpit in your city."

The banker named one of the principal cities in the east, and the minister answered, with modest pride: "I am not sure of that; but our society is certainly a very large one."

"Well, and how many of the lower classes are there in it—people who work for their living with their hands?"

The minister stirred uneasily in his chair, and at last he said, with evident unhappiness: "They—I suppose—they have their own churches. I have never thought that such a separation of the classes was right; and I have had some of the very best people—socially and financially—with me in the wish that there might be more brotherliness between the rich and poor among us. But as yet"—

He stopped; the banker pursued: "Do you mean there are *no* working-people in your congregation?"

"I cannot think of any," returned the minister so miserably that the banker forbore to press the point.

The lawyer broke the awkward pause which followed: "I have heard it asserted that there is no country in the world, where the separation of the classes is so absolute as in ours. In fact, I once heard a Russian revolutionist, who had lived in exile all over Europe, say that he had never seen anywhere such a want of kindness or sympathy between rich and poor, as he had observed in America. I doubted whether he was right. But he believed that, if it ever came to

the industrial revolution with us, the fight would be more uncompromising than any such fight the world has ever seen. There was no respect from low to high, he said, and no consideration from high to low, as there were in countries with traditions and old associations."

"Well," said the banker, "there may be something in that. Certainly, so far as the two forces have come into conflict here, there has been no disposition, on either side, to 'make war with the water of roses.' It's astonishing, in fact, to see how ruthless the fellows who have just got up are towards the fellows who are still down. And the best of us have been up only a generation or two—and the fellows who are still down know it."

"And what do you think would be the outcome of such a conflict?" I asked, with my soul divided between fear of it, and the perception of its excellence as material. My fancy vividly sketched the outline of a story which should forecast the struggle and its event, somewhat on the plan of the Battle of Dorking.¹

"We should beat," said the banker, breaking his cigar-ash off with his little finger; and I instantly cast him, with his ironic calm, for the part of a great patrician leader, in my Fall of the Republic. Of course, I disguised him somewhat, and travestied his worldly bonhomie with the bluff sang-froid of the soldier; these things are easily done.

"What makes you think we should beat?" asked the manufacturer, with a certain curiosity.

¹ In May, 1871, Gen. G. T. Chesney published in *Blackwood's Magazine* an imaginary account of a successful invasion of England. His purpose was to call attention to England's lack of adequate means of defense.

"Well, all the good jingo reasons: we have got the materials for beating. Those fellows throw away their strength whenever they begin to fight, and they've been so badly generaleed, up to the present time, that they have wanted to fight at the outset of every quarrel. They have been beaten in every quarrel, but still they always want to begin by fighting. That is all right. When they have learned enough to begin by voting, then we shall have to look out. But if they keep on fighting, and always putting themselves in the wrong and getting the worst of it, perhaps we can fix the voting so we needn't be any more afraid of that than we are of the fighting. It's astonishing how short-sighted they are. They have no conception of any cure for their grievances, except more wages and fewer hours."

"But," I asked, "do you really think they have any just grievances?"

"Of course not, as a business man," said the banker. "If I were a workingman, I should probably think differently. But we will suppose for the sake of argument, that their day is too long and their pay is too short. How do they go about to better themselves? They strike. Well, a strike is a fight, and in a fight, now-a-days, it is always skill and money that win. The workingmen can't stop till they have put themselves outside of the public sympathy which the newspapers say is so potent in their behalf; I never saw that it did them the least good. They begin by boycotting, and breaking the heads of the men who want to work. They destroy property, and they interfere with business—the two absolutely sacred things in the American religion. Then we call out the militia, and shoot a few of them, and their leaders declare the strike off. It is perfectly simple."

HENRY JAMES

1843 - 1916

Harry is as nice and simple and amiable as he can be. He has covered himself, like some marine crustacean, with all sorts of material growths, rich sea-weeds and rigid barnacles and things, and lives hidden in the midst of his strange heavy alien manners and customs; but these are all but "protective resemblances," under which the same dear old, good, innocent and at times very powerless-feeling Harry remains, caring for little but his writing, and full of dutifulness and affection for all gentle things.

—WILLIAM JAMES (*Letters*, I, 288) to MRS. JAMES, July 29, 1889.

The younger brother of William James the psychologist and philosopher, Henry James, was born in New York City on April 15, 1843. The education of the James brothers was irregular, for Henry James, Sr., did not wish his children prematurely to take root in any particular spot or to become settled in any system of habits or beliefs. They should choose for themselves, he thought, when they grew up. So a large part of Henry James's early life was spent in Europe—London, Paris, Geneva, and other places. As a result, when he came to manhood in America, where he had no roots, James was homesick for the Europe he remembered. An accident to his back kept him out of the Civil War, and (like Holmes and Lowell before him) he entered the Harvard Law School because he wanted to do something practical and nothing else offered. Already he was coming to see himself as a spectator of life rather than as an active participant.

Before the end of the Civil War, James had glimpsed his real vocation, and he was contributing reviews to the *Nation* and the *North American Review* and stories to the *Galaxy* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. The long and laborious period of his apprenticeship lasted until 1880, when *The Portrait of a Lady* began to appear in *Macmillan's Magazine*. James was not a born storyteller like Scott or Cooper. He was a self-made novelist, and his talent was more critical than creative. In the end his intelligence and persistence brought him the mastery of his craft. He began his literary work in Boston and Cambridge, and—so far as he belongs to any American literary group—he must be classed with the Cambridge circle, then in its decline. Charles Eliot Norton and William Dean Howells gave him encouragement and advice and published much of his early work. On December 5, 1866, Howells wrote to E. C. Stedman:

"Talking of talks; young Henry James and I had a famous one last evening, two or three hours long, in which we settled the true principles of literary art. He is a very earnest fellow, and I think extremely gifted—gifted enough to do better than any one has yet done toward making us a real American novel. We have in reserve from him a story for the Atlantic, which I'm sure you'll like."

A year and a half later Howells wrote to Norton: "... I cannot doubt that James has every element of success in fiction. But I suspect that he must in a degree create his audience." In *The Early Development of Henry James* (1930) Dr. Cornelia P. Kelley has shown by a comparison of James's early stories with his early critical writings just how he developed his theory of fiction and worked out his technique. Goethe, George Eliot, Balzac, and Turgenev played an important part in his development. The only American writer of fiction beside Howells to whom he owed much was Hawthorne, whose work taught him that "an American could be an artist" and create a great novel out of native materials. James, however, was never wholly satisfied with his own experiments with native materials. His taste inclined him more to the realism of Howells than to the type of romance exemplified in Hawthorne's novels; but—as one might have expected of the brother of a great psychologist—he did share Hawthorne's interest in psychological problems. When his 'prentice work was nearly over, James wrote to his brother William, November 14, 1878: "It is something to have learned to write, and when I look round me and see how few people (doing my sort of work) know how (to my sense), I don't regret my step-by-step evolution."

Meanwhile James had tried with only fair success to treat American life in his stories. Unacquainted with business, he found it difficult to know American men, who were seldom to be found at social resorts. Bachelor though he always was, James became one of the finest portrayers of American women, especially of American women who travel abroad. His discouragement appears in a letter to Norton, January 16, 1871:

"Looking about for myself, I conclude that the face of nature and civilization in this our country is to a certain point a very sufficient literary field. But it will yield its secrets only to a really *grasping imagination*. . . . To write well and worthily of America one need even more than elsewhere to be a *master*. But unfortunately one is less! . . . I myself have been scribbling some little tales which in the course of time you will have a chance to read. To write a series of good little tales I deem ample work for a life-time. I dream that my life-time shall have done it. It's at least a relief to have arranged one's life-time."

In 1875, having tried living in both America and Europe, James made his decision henceforth to live in Europe and settled down in Paris. Of the writers whom he met in Paris, he was most impressed by the Russian novelist Turgenev. Speaking of the charades which were the usual Sunday evening occupation at Mme. Viardot's, James comments: "... the good faith with which Turgenev, at his age and with his glories, can go into them is a striking example of that spontaneity which Europeans have and we have not. Fancy Longfellow, Lowell or Charles Norton doing the like, and every Sunday evening!" In Paris, James was finally repelled by the utter indifference of Flaubert, Zola, and Daudet to important fiction being written in English. He discovered that he would never be able to know French life intimately from the inside. After "a long-encroaching weariness and satiety with the French mind and its utterance," he settled in 1876 in London, where (and in the little town of Rye in Sussex) he was to live the remainder of his life.

For a time James found himself too cosmopolitan to relish the English whole-heartedly; and in some of his stories—especially *An International Episode*—he showed a slight disposition to satirize the English. This naturally displeased the English, for, as James remarks, "Their conception of the normal in such a relation is that the satire should be all on their side against

the Americans. . . ." James was never to care for Englishmen as empire-builders, business men, or soldiers, but he absorbed fashionable London life voraciously. On June 8, 1879, he wrote to Miss Grace Norton that he had "dined out during the past winter 107 times!" On November 13, 1880, he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton:

"I am at least now a thoroughly naturalized Londoner—a cockney 'convaincu.' I am attached to London in spite of the long list of reasons why I should not be; I think it on the whole the best point of view in the world. There are times when the fog, the smoke, the universal uncleanness, the combined unwieldiness and flatness of much of the social life—these and many other matters—overwhelm the spirit and fill it with a yearning for other climes; but nevertheless one reverts, one sticks, one abides, one even cherishes! Considering that I lose all patience with the English about fifteen times a day, and vow that I renounce them forever, I get on with them beautifully and love them well. Our dear Vasari, I fear, couldn't have made much of them, and they would have been improved by a slight infusion of the Florentine spirit; but for all that they are, for me, the great race—even at this hour of their possible decline. Taking them altogether they are more complete than other folk, more largely nourished, deeper, denser, stronger. I think it takes more to make an Englishman, on the whole, than to make anyone else—and I say this with a consciousness of all that often seems to me to have been left out of their composition."

James was never altogether to lose his American sympathies. For a long time what most interested him was the American—especially the American woman—standing out vividly against the European background. He came finally to feel that his loyalty belonged in a sense to both countries. On October 29, 1888, he wrote to his brother William a passage that suggests some of the speeches of Winston Churchill in our time:

"I can't look at the English-American world, or feel about them, any more, save as a big Anglo-Saxon total, destined to such an amount of melting together that an insistence on their differences becomes more and more idle and pedantic; and that melting together will come the faster the more one takes it for granted and treats the life of the two countries as continuous or more or less convertible, or at any rate simply different chapters of the same general subject. Literature, fiction in particular, affords a magnificent arm for such taking for granted, and one may so do excellent work in it. I have not the least hesitation in saying that I aspire to write in such a way that it would be impossible to an outsider to say whether I am at a given moment an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America (dealing as I do with both countries,) and so far from being ashamed of such an ambiguity I should be exceedingly proud of it, for it would be highly civilized."

Two years later, however, he wrote to Howells, May 17, 1890:

"One thing only is clear, that henceforth I must do, or half do, England in fiction—as the place I see most today, and, in a sort of way, know best. I have at last more acquired notions of it, on the whole, than of any other world, and it will serve me as well as any other. It has been growing distincter that America fades from me, and as she never trusted me at best, I can trust *her*, for effect, no longer."

Toward the end of the century, however, James began to feel doubts as to the wisdom of his decision to live in Europe. In *Roadside Meetings* (1930) Hamlin Garland quotes James as saying to him about 1900:

"If I were to live my life over again," he [James] said in a low voice, and fixing upon me a somber glance, "I would be an American. I would steep myself in America, I would know no other land. I would study its beautiful side. The mixture of Europe and America which you see in me has proved disastrous. It has made of me a man who is neither American nor European. I have lost touch with my own people, and I live here [at Rye] alone. My neighbors are friendly, but they are not of my blood, except remotely. As a man grows old he feels these conditions more than when he is young. I shall never return to the United States, but I wish I could."

America finally came to seem more romantic to him than England. Feeling his powers waning, James decided to revisit the United States in search of stimulus and new materials. This he did in 1904 after an absence (excepting a few very brief visits) of nearly thirty years. Hamlin Garland, who heard him lecture in Chicago, writes in *Companions on the Trail* (1931): "His talk was high, impersonal, and wholly unconcerned with commercial considerations." In his diary Garland wrote at the time:

"James has not only become English in theme and outlook, he has grown away from any real understanding of the life about him. . . . He is right. Our literature is cheap and newspaperly in tone, our art is addressed mostly to rudimentary minds. I can imagine how we seem to him. To him literary Chicago is about as important as literary Omaha is to New York. . . . What is the use of pretending? We are still in the 'hick' stage of culture. . . ."

James's reactions to the United States may be studied in *The American Scene* (1907), which is a good specimen of his later style; but his letters are less restrained. From Garland's Chicago he wrote on March 19, 1905:

". . . alack, I am already (after 17 days of the 'great Middle West') rather spent and weary, weary of motion and chatter, and oh, of such an unimagined dreariness of *ugliness* (on many, on most sides!) and of the perpetual effort to "do justice" to what one doesn't like. If one could only damn it and have done with it! So much of it is rank with good intentions. And then the 'kindness'—the princely (as it were) hospitality of these clubs; besides the sense of *power*, huge and augmenting power (vast mechanical, industrial, social, financial) everywhere! This Chicago is huge, *infinite* (of potential size and form, and even of actual;) black, smoky, *old-looking*, very like some preternaturally *boomed* Manchester or Glasgow lying beside a colossal lake (Michigan) of hard pale green jade, and putting forth railway antennæ of maddening complexity and gigantic length."

California brought him his greatest surprise:

"California . . . when all is said (Southern C. at least—which, however, the real C., I believe, much repudiates,) has completely bowled me over—such a delicious difference from the rest of the U. S. do I find in it. (I speak of course all of nature and climate, fruits and flowers: for there is absolutely nothing else, and the sense of the shining social and human inane is utter.)"

Finally, when safely back at Rye, James wrote on March 11, 1906:

"It [America] is an extraordinary world, an altogether huge 'proposition,' as they say there, giving one, I think, an immense impression of material and political power; but almost cruelly charmless, in effect, and calculated to make one crouch, ever afterwards, as cravenly as possible, at Lamb House, Rye—if one happens to have a poor little L. H., R., to crouch in."

In 1907-1909 appeared James's collected novels and tales, with new and illuminating prefaces to which Ezra Pound has referred as "the one extant great treatise on novel writing in English." The earlier novels included were revised and recast in James's later manner. After a disastrous attempt to write plays in the eighteen-nineties, James had developed the involved style to which his brother William objected. Most of James's followers prefer his later manner, but it made him an object of curiosity to the general public.

The First World War crashed into James's world so that he was never able to complete books that he had planned to write. He had never cared for Germany; England, America, France, and Italy represented the civilization he loved. Disgusted with American neutrality, he became in 1915 a British subject. He died on February 28, 1916, leaving instructions that his body should be cremated and the ashes taken to Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Mass. Had he lived fifteen months longer, he would have rejoiced at America's entrance into the war on the side of the England he loved so well. He was, wrote Howells after James's death, "an inalienably American soul, for American was what James remained through all the perversities of his expatriation, and his adoration of foreign conditions and forms. . . ." (For a somewhat different view, see the chapter on James in Edith Wharton's *A Backward Glance*.)

Three of James's books contain biographical materials: *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914), and *The Middle Years* (1917). See also Percy Lubbock (ed.), *The Letters of Henry James* (1920) in two volumes; Mildred Howells (ed.), *The Life in Letters of William Dean Howells* (1928), and Van Wyck Brooks, *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925). The New York Edition of James's *Novels and Tales* (1906-1917) in twenty-six volumes contains carefully written prefaces (recently reprinted under the title, *The Art of Fiction*) which give James's maturer conception of his craft. For criticism, see W. C. Brownell, *American Prose Masters* (1909); Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (1921); Pelham Edgar, *Henry James: Man and Author* (1927); J. W. Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (1918); Morris Roberts, *Henry James's Criticism* (1929); and Cornelia P. Kelley, *The Early Development of Henry James* (1930). For a brief account of James, his father, and his brother William, see C. Hartley Grattan, *The Three Jameses* (1932).

Recent years have witnessed something like a James revival. Among important recent publications are: F. O. Matthiessen, *Henry James: The Major Phase* (1944); F. W. Dupree (ed.), *The Question of Henry James: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1945); "Homage to Henry James" [articles by Marianne Moore and others], *Hound and Horn*, VII, 361-562 (April-June, 1934); *The Notebooks of Henry James* (1947), edited by F. O. Matthiessen and K. B. Murdock; Lyon N. Richardson (ed.), *Henry James: Representative Selections* (1941), in the American Writers Series; Leon Edel (ed.), *Complete Plays of Henry James* (1949); Osborn Andreas, *Henry James and the Expanding Horizon* (1948); and Elizabeth Stevenson, *The Crooked Corridor* (1949). See also Eunice C. Hamilton, "Biographical and Critical Studies of Henry James, 1941-1948," *American Literature*, XXI, 424-435 (January, 1949).

LETTERS*

TO HIS MOTHER

FLORENCE, HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE.

October 13th, 1869.

MY DARLING MAMMY,

. . . For the past six weeks that I have been in Italy I've hardly until within a day or two exchanged five minutes' talk with any one but the servants in the hotels and the custodians in the churches. As far as meeting people is concerned, I've not as yet had in Europe a very brilliant record. Yesterday I met at the Uffizi¹ Miss Anna Vernon of Newport and her friend Mrs. Carter, with whom I had some discourse; and on the same morning I fell in with a somewhat seedy and sickly American, who seemed to be doing the gallery with an awful minuteness, and who after some conversation proposed to come and see me. He called this morning and has just left; but he seems a vague and feeble brother and I anticipate no wondrous joy from his acquaintance. The "hardly" in the clause above is meant to admit two or three Englishmen with whom I have been thrown for a few hours. . . . One especially, whom I met at Verona, won my affections so rapidly that I was really sad at losing him. But he has vanished, leaving only a delightful impression and not even a name—a man of about 38, with a sort of quiet perfection of English virtue about him, such as I have rarely found in another. Willy² asked me in one of his recent letters for an "opinion" of the English, which I haven't yet had time to give—tho' at times I have felt as if it were a theme on which I could write from a full mind. In fact, however, I have very little right to have any opinion on the matter. I've seen far too few specimens and those too superficially. The only thing I'm certain about is that I like them—like them heartily. W. asked if as individuals they "kill" the individual American. To this I would say that the Englishmen I have met not only kill, but bury in unfathomable depths, the Americans I have met. A set of people less framed to provoke national self-complacency than the latter it would be hard to imagine. There is but one word to use in regard to them—vulgar, vulgar, vulgar. Their

ignorance—their stingy, defiant, grudging attitude towards everything European—their perpetual reference of all things to some American standard or precedent which exists only in their own unscrupulous wind-bags—and then our unhappy poverty of voice, of speech and of physiognomy—these things glare at you hideously. On the other hand, we seem a people of *character*, we seem to have energy, capacity and intellectual stuff in ample measure. What I have pointed at as our vices are the elements of the modern man with *culture* quite left out. It's the absolute and incredible lack of *culture* that strikes you in common travelling Americans. The pleasantness of the English, on the other side, comes in a great measure from the fact of their each having been dipped into the crucible, which gives them a sort of coating of comely varnish and colour. They have been smoothed and polished by mutual social attrition. They have manners and a language. We lack both, but particularly the latter. I have seen very "nasty" Britons, certainly, but as a rule they are such as to cause your heart to warm to them. The women are at once better and worse than the men. Occasionally they are hard, flat, and greasy and dowdy to downright repulsiveness; but frequently they have a modest, matronly charm which is the perfection of womanishness and which makes Italian and Frenchwomen—and to a certain extent even our own—seem like a species of feverish highly-developed invalids. You see Englishmen, here in Italy, to a particularly good advantage. In the midst of these false and beautiful Italians they glow with the light of the great fact, that after all they love a bath-tub and they hate a lie.

16th, Sunday. I have seen some nice Americans and I still love my country. I have called upon Mrs. Huntingdon and her two daughters—late of Cambridge—whom I met in Switzerland and who have an apartment here. The daughters more than reconcile me to the shrill-voiced sirens of New England's rock-bound coast. The youngest is delightfully beautiful and sweet—and the elder delightfully sweet and plain—with a plainness *qui vaut bien des beautés*. . . .³

Maman de mon âme,⁴ farewell. I have kept my letter three days, hoping for news from home. I hope you are not paying me back for that si-

* Reprinted from *The Letters of Henry James* by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

¹ A picture gallery in Florence.

² His brother, William James, the psychologist.

³ "Which is worth many beauties."

⁴ "Beloved mother."

lence of six weeks ago. Blessings on your universal heads.

Thy lone and loving exile,

H. J. JR.

TO HIS FATHER

GREAT MALVERN [ENGLAND]

March 19th, '70.

DEAR FATHER,

. . . The other afternoon I trudged over to Worcester—through a region so thick-sown with good old English “effects”—with elm-scattered meadows and sheep-cropped commons and the ivy-smothered dwellings of small gentility, and high-gables, heavy-timbered, broken-plastered farmhouses, and stiles leading to delicious meadow footpaths and lodge-gates leading to far-off manors—with all things suggestive of the opening chapters of half-remembered novels, devoured in infancy—that I felt as if I were pressing all England to my soul. As I neared the good old town I saw the great Cathedral tower, high and square, rise far into the cloud-dappled blue. And as I came nearer still I stopped on the bridge and viewed the great ecclesiastical pile cast downward into the yellow Severn. And going further yet I entered the town and lounged about the close and gazed my fill at that most soul-sustaining sight—the waning afternoon, far aloft on the broad perpendicular field of the Cathedral spire—tasted too, as deeply, of the peculiar stillness and repose of the close—saw a ruddy English lad come out and lock the door of the old foundation school which marries its heavy gothic walls to the basement of the church, and carry the vast big key into one of the still canonical houses—and stood wondering as to the effect on a man’s mind of having in one’s boyhood haunted the Cathedral shade as a King’s scholar and yet kept ruddy with much cricket in misty meadows by the Severn. This is a sample of the meditations suggested in my daily walks. Envy me—if you can without hating! I wish I could describe them all—Colwell Green especially, where, weather favouring, I expect to drag myself this afternoon—where each square yard of ground lies ver-
dantly brimming with the deepest British picturesque, and half begging, half deprecating a sketch. You should see how a certain stile-broken

footpath here winds through the meadows to a little grey rook-haunted church. Another region fertile in walks is the great line of hills. Half an hour’s climb will bring you to the top of the Beacon—the highest of the range—and here is a breezy world of bounding turf with twenty counties at your feet—and when the mist is thick something immensely English in the situation (as if you were wandering on some mighty seaward cliffs or downs, haunted by vague traditions of an early battle). You may wander for hours—delighting in the great green landscape as it responds forever to the cloudy movements of heaven—scaring the sheep—wishing horribly that your mother and sister were—I can’t say *mounted*—on a couple of little white-aproned donkeys, climbing comfortably at your side. But at this rate I shall tire you out with my walks as effectually as I sometimes tire myself. . . . Kiss mother for her letter—and for that villainous cold. I enfold you all in an immense embrace.

Your faithful son,

H.

WILLIAM JAMES TO HENRY JAMES

The literary methods of the James brothers were very different. After reading *The American Scene* William James wrote to his brother on May 4, 1907:

DEAREST H.—. . . I’ve been so overwhelmed with work, and the mountain of the *Unread* has piled up so, that only in these days here have I really been able to settle down to your “American Scene,” which in its peculiar way seems to me *supremely great*. You know how opposed your whole “third manner” of execution is to the literary ideals which animate my crude and Orson-like breast, mine being to say a thing in one sentence as straight and explicit as it can be made, and then to drop it forever; yours being to avoid naming it straight, but by dint of breathing and sighing all round and round it, to arouse in the reader who may have had a similar perception already (Heaven help him if he hasn’t!) the illusion of the solid object, (like the “ghost” at the Polytechnic) wholly out of impalpable materials, air, and the prismatic interferences of light, ingeniously focused by mirrors upon empty space. But you *do* it, that’s the queeriness! And the complication of innuendo and associative reference on the enormous scale to which you give way to it does so *build out* the matter for

the reader that the result is to solidify, by the mere bulk of the process, the like perception from which *he* has to start. As air, by dint of its volume, will weigh like a corporeal body; so his own poor little initial perception, swathed in this gigantic envelopment of suggestive atmosphere, grows like a germ into something vastly bigger and more substantial. But it's the rummest method for one to employ systematically as you do nowadays; and you employ it at your peril. In this crowded and hurried reading age, pages that require such close attention remain unread and neglected. You can't skip a word if you are to get the effect, and 19 out of 20 worthy readers grow intolerant. The method seems perverse: "Say it *out*, for God's sake," they cry, "and have done with it." And so I say now, give us *one* thing in your older directer manner, just to show that, in spite of your paradoxical success in this unheard-of method, you *can* still write according to accepted canons. Give us that interlude; and then continue like the "curiosity of literature" which you have become. For gleams and innuendoes and felicitous verbal insinuations you are unapproachable, but the *core* of literature is solid. Give it to us *once* again! The bare perfume of things will not support existence, and the effect of solidity you reach is but perfume and simulacrum. . . .

TO WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

3 BOLTON STREET, W. [LONDON]

Jan. 31st [1880].

MY DEAR HOWELLS,

Your letter of Jan. 19th and its enclosure (your review of my *Hawthorne*)¹³ came to me last night, and I must thank you without delay for each of them. . . .

Your review of my book is very handsome and friendly and commands my liveliest gratitude. Of course your graceful strictures seem to yourself more valid than they do to me. The little book was a tolerably deliberate and meditated performance, and I should be prepared to do battle for most of the convictions expressed. It is quite true I use the word provincial too many times—I hated myself for't, even while I did it (just as I overdo the epithet "dusky.") But I don't at all agree with you in thinking that "if

it is not provincial for an Englishman to be English, a Frenchman French, etc., so it is not provincial for an American to be American." So it is not provincial for a Russian, an Australian, a Portuguese, a Dane, a Laplander, to savour of their respective countries: that would be where the argument would land you. I think it is extremely provincial for a Russian to be very Russian, a Portuguese very Portuguese; for the simple reason that certain national types are essentially and intrinsically provincial. I sympathize even less with your protest against the idea that it takes an old civilization to set a novelist in motion—a proposition that seems to me so true as to be a truism. It is on manners, customs, usages, habits, forms, upon all these things matured and established, that a novelist lives—they are the very stuff his work is made of; and in saying that in the absence of those "dreary and worn-out paraphernalia" which I enumerate as being wanting in American society, "we have simply the whole of human life left," you beg (to my sense) the question. I should say we had just so much less of it as these same "paraphernalia" represent, and I think they represent an enormous quantity of it. I shall feel refuted only when we have produced (setting the present high company—yourself and me—for obvious reasons apart) a gentleman who strikes me as a novelist—as belonging to the company of Balzac and Thackeray. Of course, in the absence of this god-send, it is but a harmless amusement that we should reason about it, and maintain that if right were right he should already be here. I will freely admit that such a genius will get on *only* by agreeing with your view of the case—to do something great he must feel as you feel about it. But then I doubt whether such a genius—a man of the faculty of Balzac and Thackeray—*could* agree with you! When he does I will lie flat on my stomach and do him homage—in the very centre of the contributor's club, or on the threshold of the magazine, or in any public place you may appoint!—But I didn't mean to wrangle with you—I meant only to thank you and to express my sense of how happily you turn those things.—I am greatly amused at your picture of the contributing bloodhounds whom you are holding in check. I wish immensely that you would let them fly at me—though there is no reason, certainly, that the decent public should be bespattered, periodically, with my gore. However

¹³ See the extract from James's *Hawthorne* given on p. 296.

my tender (or rather my very tough) flesh is prescient already of the Higginsonian fangs. Happy man, to be going, like that, to see your plays acted. It is a sensation I am dying (though not as yet trying) to cultivate. What a tremendous quantity of work you must get through in these years! I am impatient for the next *Atlantic*. What is your *Cornhill* novel about? I am to precede it with a poorish story¹⁴ in three numbers—a tale purely American, the writing of which made me feel acutely the want of the “paraphernalia.” I *must* add, however (to return for a moment to this), that I applaud and esteem you highly for not feeling it; i.e. the want. You are certainly right—magnificently and heroically right—to do so, and on the day you make your readers—I mean the readers who know and appreciate the paraphernalia—do the same, you will be the American Balzac. That’s a great mission—go in for it! Wherever you go, receive, and distribute among your wife and children, the blessing of yours ever,

H. JAMES JR.

TO WILLIAM JAMES

Compare William James’s letter to Henry James, May 4, 1907, given on p. 613.

LAMB HOUSE, RYE.

November 23rd, 1905.

- - - I mean (in response to what you write me of your having read the *Golden B[owl]*) to try to produce some uncanny form of thing, in fiction, that will gratify you, as Brother—but let me say, dear William, that I shall greatly be humiliated if you *do* like it, and thereby lump it, in your affection, with things, of the current age, that I have heard you express admiration for and that I would sooner descend to a dishonoured grave than have written. Still I *will* write you your book, on that two-and-two-make-four system on which all the awful truck that surrounds us is produced, and *then* descend to my dishonoured grave—taking up the art of the slate pencil instead of, longer, the art of the brush (vide my lecture on Balzac). But it is, seriously, too late at night, and I am too tired, for me to express myself on this question—beyond saying that I’m always sorry when I hear of your

reading anything of mine, and always hope you won’t—you seem to me so constitutionally unable to “enjoy” it, and so condemned to look at it from a point of view remotely alien to mine in writing it, and to the conditions out of which, as mine, it has inevitably sprung—so that all the intentions that have been its main reason for being (with *me*) appear never to have reached you at all—and you appear even to assume that the life, the elements forming its subject-matter, deviate from felicity in not having an impossible analogy with the life of Cambridge. I see nowhere about me done or dreamed of the things that alone for me constitute the *interest* of the doing of the novel—and yet it is in a sacrifice of them on their very own ground that the thing you suggest to me evidently consists. It shows how far apart and to what different ends we have had to work out (very naturally and properly!) our respective intellectual lives. And yet I can read *you* with rapture—having three weeks ago spent three or four days with Manton Marble at Brighton and found in his hands ever so many of your recent papers and discourses, which, having margin of mornings in my room, through both breakfasting and lunching there (by the habit of the house,) I found time to read several of—with the effect of asking you, earnestly, to address me some of those that I so often, in Irving St., saw you address to others who were not your brother. I had no time to read them there. Philosophically, in short, I am “with” you, almost completely, and you ought to take account of this and get me over altogether. - - -

THE DEATH OF THE LION*

(1894)

In the preface to Volume XV of his collected *Novels and Tales* (1909) James tells how he came to write “The Death of the Lion” and other stories of literary life for *The Yellow Book* (1894-1897). This magazine, best remembered on account of Aubrey Beardsley’s illustrations, was edited by Henry Harland (1861-1905), an American then living in England. James, reacting from his futile attempt to write plays that would please the London public, was beginning to develop his later manner, writing not for

¹⁴ *Washington Square*.

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the many but for the few. When Harland offered him more space than the average magazine editor would have permitted in a short story, James saw his chance to write something corresponding to the French *nouvelle*. The story of "the practically harried and hunted Neil Paraday and his borrowed, brandished and then fatally mislaid manuscript" is an indictment of the general public's "stupidity and vulgarity and hypocrisy" when it has to do with a great artist. The scene of the story is England, but the story itself would not be essentially different if it had been laid in the America of 1894 or of today.

See the passage in *The Notebooks of Henry James* (1947), beginning: "Could not something be done with the idea of the great (the distinguished, the celebrated) artist—man of letters he must, in the case be—who is tremendously made up to, *feted*, written to for his autograph, portrait, etc., and yet with whose work, in this age of advertisement and newspaperism, this age of interviewing, not one of the persons concerned has the smallest acquaintance?"

I had simply, I suppose, a change of heart, and it must have begun when I received my manuscript back from Mr. Pinhorn. Mr. Pinhorn was my "chief," as he was called in the office: he had accepted the high mission of bringing the paper up. This was a weekly periodical, which had been supposed to be almost past redemption when he took hold of it. It was Mr. Deedy who had let the thing down so dreadfully: he was never mentioned in the office now save in connexion with that misdemeanour. Young as I was I had been in a manner taken over from Mr. Deedy, who had been owner as well as editor; forming part of a promiscuous lot, mainly plant and office-furniture, which poor Mrs. Deedy, in her bereavement and depression, parted with at a rough valuation. I could account for my continuity but on the supposition that I had been cheap. I rather resented the practice of fathering all flatness on my late protector, who was in his unhonoured grave; but as I had my way to make I found matter enough for complacency in being on a "staff." At the same time I was aware of my exposure to suspicion as a product of the old lowering system. This made me feel I was doubly bound to have ideas, and had doubtless been at the bottom of my proposing to Mr. Pinhorn that I should lay my lean hands on Neil Paraday. I remember how he looked at me—quite, to begin with, as if he had never heard of this celebrity, who indeed at that moment was by no means in the centre of

the heavens; and even when I had knowingly explained he expressed but little confidence in the demand for any such stuff. When I had reminded him that the great principle on which we were supposed to work was just to create the demand we required, he considered a moment and then returned: "I see—you want to write him up."

"Call it that if you like."

"And what's your inducement?"

"Bless my soul—my admiration!"

Mr. Pinhorn pursed his mouth. "Is there much to be done with him?"

"Whatever there is we should have it all to ourselves, for he hasn't been touched."

This argument was effective and Mr. Pinhorn responded. "Very well, touch him." Then he added: "But where can you do it?"

"Under the fifth rib!"

Mr. Pinhorn stared. "Where's that?"

"You want me to go down and see him?" I asked when I had enjoyed his visible search for the obscure suburb I seemed to have named.

"I don't 'want' anything—the proposal's your own. But you must—remember that that's the way we do things *now*," said Mr. Pinhorn with another dig at Mr. Deedy.

Unregenerate as I was I could read the queer implications of this speech. The present owner's superior virtue as well as his deeper craft spoke in his reference to the late editor as one of that baser sort who deal in false representations. Mr. Deedy would as soon have sent me to call on Neil Paraday as he would have published a "holiday-number"; but such scruples presented themselves as mere ignoble thrift to his successor, whose own sincerity took the form of ringing door-bells and whose definition of genius was the art of finding people at home. It was as if Mr. Deedy had published reports without his young men's having, as Mr. Pinhorn would have said, really been there. I was unregenerate, as I have hinted, and couldn't be concerned to straighten out the journalistic morals of my chief, feeling them indeed to be an abyss over the edge of which it was better not to peer. Really to be there this time moreover was a vision that made the idea of writing something subtle about Neil Paraday only the more inspiring. I would be as considerate as even Mr. Deedy could have wished, and yet I should be as present as only Mr. Pinhorn could conceive.

My allusion to the sequestered manner in which Mr. Paraday lived—it had formed part of my explanation, though I knew of it only by hearsay—was, I could divine, very much what had made Mr. Pinhorn nibble. It struck him as inconsistent with the success of his paper that any one should be so sequestered as that. And then wasn't an immediate exposure of everything just what the public wanted? Mr. Pinhorn effectually called me to order by reminding me of the promptness with which I had met Miss Braby at Liverpool on her return from her fiasco in the States. Hadn't we published, while its freshness and flavour were unimpaired, Miss Braby's own version of that great international episode? I felt somewhat uneasy at this lumping of the actress and the author, and I confess that after having enlisted Mr. Pinhorn's sympathies I procrastinated a little. I had succeeded better than I wished, and I had, as it happened, work nearer at hand. A few days later I called on Lord Crouchley and carried off in triumph the most unintelligible statement that had yet appeared of his lordship's reasons for his change of front. I thus set in motion in the daily papers columns of virtuous verbiage. The following week I ran down to Brighton for a chat, as Mr. Pinhorn called it, with Mrs. Bounder, who gave me, on the subject of her divorce, many curious particulars that had not been articulated in court. If ever an article flowed from the primal fount it was that article on Mrs. Bounder. By this time, however, I became aware that Neil Paraday's new book was on the point of appearing and that its approach had been the ground of my original appeal to Mr. Pinhorn, who was now annoyed with me for having lost so many days. He bundled me off—we would at least not lose another. I've always thought his sudden alertness a remarkable example of the journalistic instinct. Nothing had occurred, since I first spoke to him, to create a visible urgency, and no enlightenment could possibly have reached him. It was a pure case of professional *flair*—he had smelt the coming glory as an animal smells its distant prey.

II

I may as well say at once that this little record pretends in no degree to be a picture either of my introduction to Mr. Paraday or of certain proximate steps and stages. The scheme of my

narrative allows no space for these things, and in any case a prohibitory sentiment would hang about my recollection of so rare an hour. These meagre notes are essentially private, so that if they see the light the insidious forces that, as my story itself shows, make at present for publicity will simply have overmastered my precautions. The curtain fell lately enough on the lamentable drama. My memory of the day I alighted at Mr. Paraday's door is a fresh memory of kindness, hospitality, compassion, and of the wonderful illuminating talk in which the welcome was conveyed. Some voice of the air had taught me the right moment, the moment of his life at which an act of unexpected young allegiance might most come home to him. He had recently recovered from a long, grave illness. I had gone to the neighbouring inn for the night, but I spent the evening in his company, and he insisted the next day on my sleeping under his roof. I hadn't an indefinite leave: Mr. Pinhorn supposed us to put our victims through on the gallop. It was later, in the office, that the rude motions of the jig were set to music. I fortified myself, however, as my training had taught me to do, by the conviction that nothing could be more advantageous for my article than to be written in the very atmosphere. I said nothing to Mr. Paraday about it, but in the morning, after my removal from the inn, while he was occupied in his study, as he had notified me he should be, I committed to paper the main heads of my impression. Then thinking to commend myself to Mr. Pinhorn by my celerity, I walked out and posted my little packet before luncheon. Once my paper was written I was free to stay on, and if it was calculated to divert attention from my levity in so doing I could reflect with satisfaction that I had never been so clever. I don't mean to deny of course that I was aware it was much too good for Mr. Pinhorn; but I was equally conscious that Mr. Pinhorn had the supreme shrewdness of recognising from time to time the cases in which an article was not too bad only because it was too good. There was nothing he loved so much as to print on the right occasion a thing he hated. I had begun my visit to the great man on a Monday, and on the Wednesday his book came out. A copy of it arrived by the first post, and he let me go out into the garden with it immediately after breakfast. I read it from beginning to end that day, and in

the evening he asked me to remain with him the rest of the week and over the Sunday.

That night my manuscript came back from Mr. Pinhorn, accompanied with a letter the gist of which was the desire to know what I meant by trying to fob off on him such stuff. That was the meaning of the question, if not exactly its form, and it made my mistake immense to me. Such as this mistake was I could now only look it in the face and accept it. I knew where I had failed, but it was exactly where I couldn't have succeeded. I had been sent down to be personal and then in point of fact hadn't been personal at all: what I had dispatched to London was just a little finicking feverish study of my author's talent. Anything less relevant to Mr. Pinhorn's purpose couldn't well be imagined, and he was visibly angry at my having (at his expense, with a second-class ticket) approached the subject of our enterprise only to stand off so helplessly. For myself, I knew but too well what had happened, and how a miracle—as pretty as some old miracle of legend—had been wrought on the spot to save me. There had been a big brush of wings, the flash of an opaline robe, and then, with a great cool stir of the air, the sense of an angel's having swooped down and caught me to his bosom. He held me only till the danger was over, and it all took place in a minute. With my manuscript back on my hands I understood the phenomenon better, and the reflexions I made on it are what I meant, at the beginning of this anecdote, by my change of heart. Mr. Pinhorn's note was not only a rebuke decidedly stern, but an invitation immediately to send him—it was the case to say so—the genuine article, the revealing and reverberating sketch to the promise of which, and of which alone, I owed my squandered privilege. A week or two later I recast my peccant paper and, giving it a particular application to Mr. Paraday's new book, obtained for it the hospitality of another journal, where, I must admit, Mr. Pinhorn was so far vindicated as that it attracted not the least attention.

III

I was frankly, at the end of three days, a very prejudiced critic, so that one morning when, in the garden, my great man had offered to read me something I quite held my breath as I listened. It was the written scheme of another

book—something put aside long ago, before his illness, but that he had lately taken out again to reconsider. He had been turning it round when I came down on him, and it had grown magnificently under this second hand. Loose liberal confident, it might have passed for a great gossiping eloquent letter—the overflow into talk of an artist's amorous plan. The theme I thought singularly rich, quite the strongest he had yet treated; and this familiar statement of it, full too of fine maturities, was really, in summarised splendour, a mine of gold, a precious independent work. I remember rather profanely wondering whether the ultimate production could possibly keep at the pitch. His reading of the fond epistle, at any rate, made me feel as if I were, for the advantage of posterity, in close correspondence with him—were the distinguished person to whom it had been affectionately addressed. It was a high distinction simply to be told such things. The idea he now communicated had all the freshness, the flushed fairness, of the conception untouched and untried: it was Venus rising from the sea and before the airs had blown upon her. I had never been so throbbingly present at such an unveiling. But when he had tossed the last bright word after the others, as I had seen cashiers in banks, weighing mounds of coin, drop a final sovereign into the tray, I knew a sudden prudent alarm.

"My dear master, how, after all, are you going to do it? It's infinitely noble, but what time it will take, what patience and independence, what assured, what perfect conditions! Oh for a lone isle in a tepid sea!"

"Isn't this practically a lone isle, and aren't you, as an encircling medium, tepid enough?" he asked, alluding with a laugh to the wonder of my young admiration and the narrow limits of his little provincial home. "Time isn't what I've lacked hitherto: the question hasn't been to find it, but to use it. Of course my illness made, while it lasted, a great hole—but I dare say there would have been a great hole at any rate. The earth we tread has more pockets than a billiard-table. The great thing is now to keep on my feet."

"That's exactly what I mean."

Neil Paraday looked at me with eyes—such pleasant eyes as he had—in which, as I now recall their expression, I seem to have seen a dim imagination of his fate. He was fifty years old,

and his illness had been cruel, his convalescence slow. "It isn't as if I weren't all right."

"Oh if you weren't all right I wouldn't look at you!" I tenderly said.

We had both got up, quickened as by this clearer air, and he had lighted a cigarette. I had taken a fresh one, which with an intenser smile, by way of answer to my exclamation, he applied to the flame of his match. "If I weren't better I shouldn't have thought of *that*!" He flourished his script in his hand.

"I don't want to be discouraging, but that's not true," I returned. "I'm sure that during the months you lay here in pain you had visitations sublime. You thought of a thousand things. You think of more and more all the while. That's what makes you, if you'll pardon my familiarity, so respectable. At a time when so many people are spent you come into your second wind. But, thank God, all the same, you're better! Thank God too you're not, as you were telling me yesterday, 'successful.' If *you* weren't a failure what would be the use of trying? That's my one reserve on the subject of your recovery—that it makes you 'score,' as the newspapers say. It looks well in the newspapers, and almost anything that does that's horrible. 'We are happy to announce that Mr. Paraday, the celebrated author, is again in the enjoyment of excellent health.' Somehow I shouldn't like to see it."

"You won't see it; I'm not in the least celebrated—my obscurity protects me. But couldn't you bear even to see I was dying or dead?" my host enquired.

"Dead—*passé encore*;¹ there's nothing so safe. One never knows what a living artist may do—one has mourned so many. However, one must make the worst of it. You must be as dead as you can."

"Don't I meet that condition in having just published a book?"

"Adequately, let us hope; for the book's verily a masterpiece."

At this moment the parlour-maid appeared in the door that opened from the garden: Paraday lived at no great cost, and the frisk of petticoats, with a timorous "Sherry, sir?" was about his modest mahogany. He allowed half his income to his wife, from whom he had succeeded in separating without redundancy of legend. I had a general faith in his having behaved well,

and I had once, in London, taken Mrs. Paraday down to dinner. He now turned to speak to the maid, who offered him, on a tray, some card or note, while, agitated, excited, I wandered to the end of the precinct. The idea of his security became supremely dear to me, and I asked myself if I were the same young man who had come down a few days before to scatter him to the four winds. When I retraced my steps he had gone into the house, and the woman—the second London post had come in—had placed my letters and a newspaper on a bench. I sat down there to the letters, which were a brief business, and then, without heeding the address, took the paper from its envelope. It was the journal of highest renown, *The Empire* of that morning. It regularly came to Paraday, but I remembered that neither of us had yet looked at the copy already delivered. This one had a great mark on the "editorial" page, and, uncrumpling the wrapper, I saw it to be directed to my host and stamped with the name of his publishers. I instantly divined that *The Empire* had spoken of him, and I've not forgotten the odd little shock of the circumstance. It checked all eagerness and made me drop the paper a moment. As I sat there conscious of a palpitation I think I had a vision of what was to be. I had also a vision of the letter I would presently address to Mr. Pinhorn, breaking, as it were, with Mr. Pinhorn. Of course, however, the next minute the voice of *The Empire* was in my ears.

The article wasn't, I thanked heaven, a review; it was a "leader," the last of three, presenting Neil Paraday to the human race. His new book, the fifth from his hand, had been but a day or two out, and *The Empire*, already aware of it, fired, as if on the birth of a prince, a salute of a whole column. The guns had been booming these three hours in the house without our suspecting them. The big blundering newspaper had discovered him, and now he was proclaimed and anointed and crowned. His place was assigned him as publicly as if a fat usher with a wand had pointed to the topmost chair; he was to pass up and still up, higher and higher, between the watching faces and the envious sounds—away up to the dais and the throne. The article was "epoch-making," a landmark in his life; he had taken rank at a bound, waked up a national glory. A national glory was needed, and it was an immense convenience he was

¹ Admitted, granted.

there. What all this meant rolled over me. and I fear I grew a little faint—it meant so much more than I could say “yea” to on the spot. In a flash, somehow, all was different; the tremendous wave I speak of had swept something away. It had knocked down, I suppose, my little customary altar, my twinkling tapers and my flowers, and had reared itself into the likeness of a temple vast and bare. When Neil Paraday should come out of the house he would come out a contemporary. That was what had happened: the poor man was to be squeezed into his horrible age. I felt as if he had been overtaken on the crest of the hill and brought back to the city. A little more and he would have dipped down the short cut to posterity and escaped.

IV

When he came out it was exactly as if he had been in custody, for beside him walked a stout man with a big black beard, who, save that he wore spectacles, might have been a policeman, and in whom at a second glance I recognised the highest contemporary enterprise.

“This is Mr. Morrow,” said Paraday, looking, I thought, rather white: “he wants to publish heaven knows what about me.”

I winced as I remembered that this was exactly what I myself had wanted. “Already?” I cried with a sort of sense that my friend had fled to me for protection.

Mr. Morrow glared, agreeably, through his glasses: they suggested the electric headlights of some monstrous modern ship, and I felt as if Paraday and I were crossing terrified under his bows. I saw his momentum was irresistible. “I was confident that I should be the first in the field. A great interest is naturally felt in Mr. Paraday’s surroundings,” he heavily observed.

“I hadn’t the least idea of it,” said Paraday, as if he had been told he had been snoring.

“I find he hasn’t read the article in *The Empire*,” Mr. Morrow remarked to me. “That’s so very interesting—it’s something to start with,” he smiled. He had begun to pull off his gloves, which were violently new, and to look encouragingly round the little garden. As a “surrounding” I felt how I myself had already been taken in; I was a little fish in the stomach of a bigger one. “I represent,” our visitor continued, “a syndicate of influential journals, no less than thirty-seven, whose public—whose publics, I may

say—are in peculiar sympathy with Mr. Paraday’s line of thought. They would greatly appreciate any expression of his views on the subject of the art he so nobly exemplifies. In addition to my connexion with the syndicate just mentioned I hold a particular commission from *The Tatler*, whose most prominent department, ‘Smatter and Chatter’—I dare say you’ve often enjoyed it—attracts such attention. I was honoured only last week, as a representative of *The Tatler*, with the confidence of Guy Walsingham, the brilliant author of ‘Obsessions.’ She pronounced herself thoroughly pleased with my sketch of her method; she went so far as to say that I had made her genius more comprehensible even to herself.”

Neil Paraday had dropped on the garden-bench and sat there at once detached and confounded; he looked hard at a bare spot in the lawn, as if with an anxiety that had suddenly made him grave. His movement had been interpreted by his visitor as an invitation to sink sympathetically into a wicker chair that stood hard by, and while Mr. Morrow so settled himself I felt he had taken official possession and that there was no undoing it. One had heard of unfortunate people’s having “a man in the house,” and this was just what *we* had. There was a silence of a moment, during which we seemed to acknowledge in the only way that was possible the presence of universal fate; the sunny stillness took no pity, and my thought, as I was sure Paraday’s was doing, performed within the minute a great distant revolution. I saw just how emphatic I should make my rejoinder to Mr. Pinhorn, and that having come, like Mr. Morrow, to betray, I must remain as long as possible to save. Not because I had brought my mind back, but because our visitor’s last words were in my ear, I presently enquired with gloomy irrelevance if Guy Walsingham were a woman.

“Oh yes, a mere pseudonym—rather pretty, isn’t it?—and convenient, you know, for a lady who goes in for the larger latitude. ‘Obsessions, by Miss So-and-so,’ would look a little odd, but men are more naturally indelicate. Have you peeped into ‘Obsessions?’” Mr. Morrow continued sociably to our companion.

Paraday, still absent, remote, made no answer, as if he hadn’t heard the question; a form of intercourse that appeared to suit the cheerful Mr. Morrow as well as any other. Imperturbably

bland, he was a man of resources—he only needed to be on the spot. He had pocketed the whole poor place while Paraday and I were wool-gathering, and I could imagine that he had already got his “heads.” His system, at any rate, was justified by the inevitability with which I replied, to save my friend the trouble: “Dear no—he hasn’t read it. He doesn’t read such things!” I unwarily added.

“Things that are *too* far over the fence, eh?” I was indeed a godsend to Mr. Morrow. It was the psychological moment; it determined the appearance of his note-book, which, however, he at first kept slightly behind him, even as the dentist approaching his victim keeps the horrible forceps. “Mr. Paraday holds with the good old proprieties—I see!” And thinking of the thirty-seven influential journals, I found myself, as I found poor Paraday, helplessly assisting at the promulgation of this ineptitude. “There’s no point on which distinguished views are so acceptable as on this question—raised perhaps more strikingly than ever by Guy Walsingham—of the permissibility of the larger latitude. I’ve an appointment, precisely in connexion with it, next week, with Dora Forbes, author of ‘The Other Way Round,’ which everybody’s talking about. Has Mr. Paraday glanced at ‘The Other Way Round?’” Mr. Morrow now frankly appealed to me. I took on myself to repudiate the supposition, while our companion, still silent, got up nervously and walked away. His visitor paid no heed to his withdrawal, but opened out the note-book with a more fatherly pat. “Dora Forbes, I gather, takes the ground, the same as Guy Walsingham’s, that the larger latitude has simply got to come. He holds that it has got to be squarely faced. Of course his sex makes him a less prejudiced witness. But an authoritative word from Mr. Paraday—from the point of view of *his* sex, you know—would go right round the globe. He takes the line that we *haven’t* got to face it?”

I was bewildered: it sounded somehow as if there were three sexes. My interlocutor’s pencil was poised, my private responsibility great. I simply sat staring, none the less, and only found presence of mind to say: “Is this Miss Forbes a gentleman?”

Mr. Morrow had a subtle smile. “It wouldn’t be ‘Miss’—there’s a wife!”

“I mean is she a man?”

“The wife?”—Mr. Morrow was for a moment as confused as myself. But when I explained that I alluded to Dora Forbes in person he informed me, with visible amusement at my being so out of it, that this was the “pen-name” of an indubitable male—he had a big red moustache. “He goes in for the slight mystification because the ladies are such popular favourites. A great deal of interest is felt in his acting on that idea—which is clever, isn’t it?—and there’s every prospect of its being widely imitated.” Our host at this moment joined us again, and Mr. Morrow remarked invitingly that he should be happy to make a note of any observation the movement in question, the bid for success under a lady’s name, might suggest to Mr. Paraday. But the poor man, without catching the allusion, excused himself, pleading that, though greatly honoured by his visitor’s interest, he suddenly felt unwell and should have to take leave of him—have to go and lie down and keep quiet. His young friend might be trusted to answer for him, but he hoped Mr. Morrow didn’t expect great things even of his young friend. His young friend, at this moment, looked at Neil Paraday with an anxious eye, greatly wondering if he were doomed to be ill again; but Paraday’s own kind face met his question reassuringly, seemed to say in a glance intelligible enough: “Oh I’m not ill, but I’m scared; get him out of the house as quietly as possible.” Getting newspaper-men out of the house was odd business for an emissary of Mr. Pinhorn, and I was so exhilarated by the idea of it that I called after him as he left us: “Read the article in *The Empire* and you’ll soon be all right!”

v

“Delicious my having come down to tell him of it!” Mr. Morrow ejaculated. “My cab was at the door twenty minutes after *The Empire* had been laid on my breakfast-table. Now what have you got for me?” he continued, dropping again into his chair, from which, however, he the next moment eagerly rose. “I was shown into the drawing-room, but there must be more to see—his study, his literary sanctum, the little things he has about, or other domestic objects and features. He wouldn’t be lying down on his study-table? There’s a great interest always felt in the scene of an author’s labours. Sometimes we’re favoured with very delightful peeps. Dora Forbes

showed me all his table-drawers, and almost jammed my hand into one into which I made a dash! I don't ask that of you, but if we could talk things over right there where he sits I feel as if I should get the keynote."

I had no wish whatever to be rude to Mr. Morrow, I was too much initiated not to tend to more diplomacy; but I had a quick inspiration, and I entertained an insurmountable, an almost superstitious objection to his crossing the threshold of my friend's little lonely shabby consecrated workshop. "No, no—we shan't get at his life that way," I said. "The way to get at his life is to— But wait a moment!" I broke off and went quickly into the house, whence I in three minutes reappeared before Mr. Morrow with the two volumes of Paraday's new book. "His life's here," I went on, "and I'm so full of this admirable thing that I can't talk of anything else. The artist's life's his work, and this is the place to observe him. What he has to tell us he tells us with *this* perfection. My dear sir, the best interviewer's the best reader."

Mr. Morrow good-humouredly protested. "Do you mean to say that no other source of information should be open to us?"

"None other till this particular one—by far the most copious—has been quite exhausted. Have you exhausted it, my dear sir? Had you exhausted it when you came down here? It seems to me in our time almost wholly neglected, and something should surely be done to restore its ruined credit. It's the course to which the artist himself at every step, and with such pathetic confidence, refers us. This last book of Mr. Paraday's is full of revelations."

"Revelations?" panted Mr. Morrow, whom I had forced again into his chair.

"The only kind that count. It tells you with a perfection that seems to me quite final all the author thinks, for instance, about the advent of the 'larger latitude.'"

"Where does it do that?" asked Mr. Morrow, who had picked up the second volume and was insincerely thumbing it.

"Everywhere—in the whole treatment of his case. Extract the opinion, disengage the answer—those are the real acts of homage."

Mr. Morrow, after a minute, tossed the book away. "Ah but you mustn't take me for a reviewer."

"Heaven forbid I should take you for any-

thing so dreadful! You came down to perform a little act of sympathy, and so, I may confide to you, did I. Let us perform our little act together. These pages overflow with the testimony we want: let us read them and taste them and interpret them. You'll of course have perceived for yourself that one scarcely does read Neil Paraday till one reads him aloud; he gives out to the ear an extraordinary full tone, and it's only when you expose it confidently to that test that you really get near his style. Take up your book again and let me listen, while you pay it out, to that wonderful fifteenth chapter. If you feel you can't do it justice, compose yourself to attention while I produce for you—I think I can!—this scarcely less admirable ninth."

Mr. Morrow gave me a straight look which was as hard as a blow between the eyes; he had turned rather red, and a question had formed itself in his mind which reached my sense as distinctly as if he had uttered it: "What sort of damned fool are *you*?" Then he got up, gathering together his hat and gloves, buttoning his coat, projecting hungrily all over the place the big transparency of his mask. It seemed to flare over Fleet Street and somehow made the actual spot distressingly humble: there was so little for it to feed on unless he counted the blisters of our stucco or saw his way to do something with the roses. Even the poor roses were common kinds. Presently his eyes fell on the manuscript from which Paraday had been reading to me and which still lay on the bench. As my own followed them I saw it looked promising, looked pregnant, as if it gently throbbed with the life the reader had given it. Mr. Morrow indulged in a nod at it and a vague thrust of his umbrella. "What's that?"

"Oh, it's a plan—a secret."

"A secret!" There was an instant's silence, and then Mr. Morrow made another movement. I may have been mistaken, but it affected me as the translated impulse of the desire to lay hands on the manuscript, and this led me to indulge in a quick anticipatory grab which may very well have seemed ungraceful, or even impertinent, and which at any rate left Mr. Paraday's two admirers very erect, glaring at each other while one of them held a bundle of papers well behind him. An instant later Mr. Morrow quitted me abruptly, as if he had really carried something off with him. To reassure myself,

watching his broad back recede, I only grasped my manuscript the tighter. He went to the back door of the house, the one he had come out from, but on trying the handle he appeared to find it fastened. So he passed round into the front garden, and by listening intently enough I could presently hear the outer gate close behind him with a bang. I thought again of the thirty-seven influential journals and wondered what would be his revenge. I hasten to add that he was magnanimous: which was just the most dreadful thing he could have been. *The Tatler* published a charming chatty familiar account of Mr. Paraday's "Home-life," and on the wings of the thirty-seven influential journals it went, to use Mr. Morrow's own expression, right round the globe.

VI

A week later, early in May, my glorified friend came up to town, where, it may be veraciously recorded, he was the king of the beasts of the year. No advancement was ever more rapid, no exaltation more complete, no bewilderment more teachable. His book sold but moderately, though the article in *The Empire* had done unwonted wonders for it; but he circulated in person to a measure that the libraries might well have envied. His formula had been found—he was a "revelation." His momentary terror had been real, just as mine had been—the overclouding of his passionate desire to be left to finish his work. He was far from unsociable, but he had the finest conception of being let alone that I've ever met. For the time, none the less, he took his profit where it seemed most to crowd on him, having in his pocket the portable sophistries about the nature of the artist's task. Observation too was a kind of work and experience a kind of success; London dinners were all material and London ladies were fruitful soil. "No one has the faintest conception of what I'm trying for," he said to me, "and not many have read three pages that I've written; but I must dine with them first—they'll find out why when they've time." It was rather rude justice perhaps; but the fatigue had the merit of being a new sort, while the phantasmagoric town was probably after all less of a battlefield than the haunted study. He once told me that he had had no personal life to speak of since his fortieth year, but had had more than was good for him before. London closed the parenthesis and ex-

hibited him in relations; one of the most inevitable of these being that in which he found himself to Mrs. Weeks Wimbush, wife of the boundless brewer and proprietress of the universal menagerie. In this establishment, as everybody knows, on occasions when the crush is great, the animals rub shoulders freely with the spectators and the lions sit down for whole evenings with the lambs.

It had been ominously clear to me from the first that in Neil Paraday this lady, who, as all the world agreed, was tremendous fun, considered that she had secured a prime attraction, a creature of almost heraldic oddity. Nothing could exceed her enthusiasm over her capture, and nothing could exceed the confused apprehensions it excited in me. I had an instinctive fear of her which I tried without effect to conceal from her victim, but which I let her notice with perfect impunity. Paraday heeded it, but she never did, for her conscience was that of a romping child. She was a blind violent force to which I could attach no more idea of responsibility than to the creaking of a sign in the wind. It was difficult to say what she conduced to but circulation. She was constructed of steel and leather, and all I asked of her for our tractable friend was not to do him to death. He had consented for a time to be of india-rubber, but my thoughts were fixed on the day he should resume his shape or at least get back into his box. It was evidently all right, but I should be glad when it was well over. I had a special fear—the impression was ineffaceable of the hour when, after Mr. Morrow's departure, I had found him on the sofa in his study. That pretext of indisposition had not in the least been meant as a snub to the envoy of *The Tatler*—he had gone to lie down in very truth. He had felt a pang of his old pain, the result of the agitation wrought in him by this forcing open of a new period. His old programme, his old ideal even had to be changed. Say what one would, success was a complication and recognition had to be reciprocal. The monastic life, the pious illumination of the missal in the convent-cell were things of the gathered past. It didn't engender despair, but at least it required adjustment. Before I left him on that occasion we had passed a bargain, my part of which was that I should make it my business to take care of him. Let whoever would represent the interest in his presence (I must

have had a mystical prevision of Mrs. Weeks Wimbush) I should represent the interest in his work—or otherwise expressed in his absence. These two interests were in their essence opposed; and I doubt, as youth is fleeting, if I shall ever again know the intensity of joy with which I felt that in so good a cause I was willing to make myself odious.

One day in Sloane Street I found myself questioning Paraday's landlord, who had come to the door in answer to my knock. Two vehicles, a barouche and a smart hansom, were drawn up before the house.

"In the drawing-room, sir? Mrs. Weeks Wimbush."

"And in the dining-room?"

"A young lady, sir—waiting: I think a foreigner."

It was three o'clock, and on days when Paraday didn't lunch out he attached a value to these appropriated hours. On which days, however, didn't the dear man lunch out? Mrs. Wimbush, at such a crisis, would have rushed round immediately after her own repast. I went into the dining-room first, postponing the pleasure of seeing how, upstairs, the lady of the barouche would, on my arrival, point the moral of my sweet solicitude. No one took such an interest as herself in his doing only what was good for him, and she was always on the spot to see that he did it. She made appointments with him to discuss the best means of economising his time and protecting his privacy. She further made his health her special business, and had so much sympathy with my own zeal for it that she was the author of pleasing fictions on the subject of what my devotion had led me to give up. I gave up nothing (I don't count Mr. Pinhorn) because I had nothing, and all I had as yet achieved was to find myself also in the menagerie. I had dashed in to save my friend, but I had only got domesticated and wedged; so that I could do little more for him than exchange with him over people's heads looks of intense but futile intelligence.

VII

The young lady in the dining-room had a brave face, black hair, blue eyes, and in her lap a big volume. "I've come for his autograph," she said when I had explained to her that I was under bonds to see people for him when he was occupied. "I've been waiting half an hour, but

I'm prepared to wait all day." I don't know whether it was this that told me she was American, for the propensity to wait all day is not in general characteristic of her race. I was enlightened probably not so much by the spirit of the utterance as by some quality of its sound. At any rate I saw she had an individual patience and a lovely frock, together with an expression that played among her pretty features like a breeze among flowers. Putting her book on the table she showed me a massive album, showily bound and full of autographs of price. The collection of faded notes, of still more faded "thoughts," of quotations, platitudes, signatures, represented a formidable purpose.

I could only disclose my dread of it. "Most people apply to Mr. Paraday by letter, you know."

"Yes, but he doesn't answer. I've written three times."

"Very true," I reflected; "the sort of letter you mean goes straight into the fire."

"How do you know the sort I mean?" My interlocutress had blushed and smiled, and in a moment she added: "I don't believe he gets many like them!"

"I'm sure they're beautiful, but he burns without reading." I didn't add that I had convinced him he ought to.

"Isn't he then in danger of burning things of importance?"

"He would perhaps be so if distinguished men hadn't an infallible nose for nonsense."

She looked at me a moment—her face was sweet and gay. "Do you burn without reading too?"—in answer to which I assured her that if she'd trust me with her repository I'd see that Mr. Paraday should write his name in it.

She considered a little. "That's very well, but it wouldn't make me see him."

"Do you want very much to see him?" It seemed ungracious to catechize so charming a creature, but somehow I had never yet taken my duty to the great author so seriously.

"Enough to have come from America for the purpose."

I stared. "All alone?"

"I don't see that that's exactly your business, but if it will make me more seductive I'll confess that I'm quite by myself. I had to come alone or not come at all."

She was interesting. I could imagine she had lost parents, natural protectors—could conceive

even she had inherited money. I was at a pass of my own fortunes when keeping hansoms at doors seemed to me pure swagger. As a trick of this bold and sensitive girl, however, it became romantic—a part of the general romance of her freedom, her errand, her innocence. The confidence of young Americans was notorious, and I speedily arrived at a conviction that no impulse could have been more generous than the impulse that had operated here. I foresaw at the moment that it would make her my peculiar charge, just as circumstances had made Neil Paraday. She would be another person to look after, so that one's honour would be concerned in guiding her straight. These things became clearer to me later on; at the instant I had scepticism enough to observe to her, as I turned the pages of her volume, that her net had all the same caught many a big fish. She appeared to have had fruitful access to the great ones of the earth; there were people moreover whose signatures she had presumably secured without a personal interview. She couldn't have worried George Washington and Friedrich Schiller and Hannah More. She met this argument, to my surprise, by throwing up the album without a pang. It wasn't even her own; she was responsible for none of its treasures. It belonged to a girl-friend in America, a young lady in a western city. This young lady had insisted on her bringing it, to pick up more autographs: she thought they might like to see, in Europe, in what company they would be. The "girl-friend," the western city, the immortal names, the curious errand, the idyllic faith, all made a story as strange to me, and as beguiling, as some tale in the Arabian Nights. Thus it was that my informant had encumbered herself with the ponderous tone; but she hastened to assure me that this was the first time she had brought it out. For her visit to Mr. Paraday it had simply been a pretext. She didn't really care a straw that he should write his name; what she did want was to look straight into his face.

I demurred a little. "And why do you require to do that?"

"Because I just love him!" Before I could recover from the agitating effect of this crystal ring my companion had continued: "Hasn't there ever been any face that *you've* wanted to look into?"

How could I tell her so soon how much I appreciated the opportunity of looking into hers?

I could only assent in general to the proposition that there were certainly for every one such yearnings, and even such faces; and I felt the crisis demanded all my lucidity, all my wisdom.

5 "Oh yes, I'm a student of physiognomy. Do you mean," I pursued, "that you've a passion for Mr. Paraday's books?"

10 "They've been everything to me and a little more beside—I know them by heart. They've completely taken hold of me. There's no author about whom I'm in such a state as I'm in about Neil Paraday."

"Permit me to remark then," I presently returned, "that you're one of the right sort."

15 "One of the enthusiasts? Of course I am!"

"Oh there are enthusiasts who are quite of the wrong. I mean you're one of those to whom an appeal can be made."

20 "An appeal?" Her face lighted as with the chance of some great sacrifice.

If she was ready for one it was only waiting for her, and in a moment I mentioned it. "Give up this crude purpose of seeing him. Go away without it. That will be far better."

25 She looked mystified, then turned visibly pale. "Why, hasn't he any personal charm?" The girl was terrible and laughable in her bright directness.

30 "Ah that dreadful word 'personal'!" I wailed; "we're dying of it, for you women bring it out with murderous effect. When you meet with a genius as fine as this idol of ours let him off the dreary duty of being a personality as well. Know him only by what's best in him and spare him for the same sweet sake."

35 My young lady continued to look at me in confusion and mistrust, and the result of her reflexion on what I had just said was to make her suddenly break out: "Look here, sir—what's the matter with him?"

40 "The matter with him is that if he doesn't look out people will eat a great hole in his life."

She turned it over. "He hasn't any disfigurement?"

45 "Nothing to speak of!"

"Do you mean that social engagements interfere with his occupations?"

"That but feebly expresses it."

50 "So that he can't give himself up to his beautiful imagination?"

"He's beset, badgered, bothered—he's pulled to pieces on the pretext of being applauded. People expect him to give them his time, his

golden time, who wouldn't themselves give five shillings for one of his books."

"Five? I'd give five thousand!"

"Give your sympathy—give your forbearance. Two thirds of those who approach him only do it to advertise themselves."

"Why it's too bad!" the girl exclaimed with the face of an angel. "It's the first time I was ever called crude!" she laughed.

I followed up my advantage. "There's a lady with him now who's a terrible complication, and who yet hasn't read, I'm sure, ten pages he ever wrote."

My visitor's wide eyes grew tenderer. "Then how does she talk—"

"Without ceasing. I only mention her as a single case. Do you want to know how to show a superlative consideration? Simply avoid him."

"Avoid him?" she despairingly breathed.

"Don't force him to have to take account of you; admire him in silence, cultivate him at a distance and secretly appropriate his message. Do you want to know," I continued, warming to my idea, "how to perform an act of homage really sublime?" Then as she hung on my words: "Succeed in never seeing him at all!"

"Never at all?"—she suppressed a shriek for it.

"The more you get into his writings the less you'll want to, and you'll be immensely sustained by the thought of the good you're doing him."

She looked at me without resentment or spite, and at the truth I had put before her with candour, credulity, pity. I was afterwards happy to remember that she must have gathered from my face the liveliness of my interest in herself. "I think I see what you mean."

"Oh I express it badly, but I should be delighted if you'd let me come to see you—to explain it better."

She made no response to this, and her thoughtful eyes fell on the big album, on which she presently laid her hands as if to take it away. "I did use to say out West that they might write a little less for autographs—to all the great poets, you know—and study the thoughts and style a little more."

"What do they care for the thoughts and style? They didn't even understand you. I'm not sure," I added, "that I do myself, and I dare say that you by no means make me out."

She had got up to go, and though I wanted

her to succeed in not seeing Neil Paraday I wanted her also, inconsequently, to remain in the house. I was at any rate far from desiring to hustle her off. As Mrs. Weeks Wimbush, upstairs, was still saving our friend in her own way, I asked my young lady to let me briefly relate, in illustration of my point, the little incident of my having gone down into the country for a profane purpose and been converted on the spot to holiness. Sinking again into her chair to listen she showed a deep interest in the anecdote. Then thinking it over gravely she returned with her odd intonation: "Yes, but you do see him!" I had to admit that this was the case; and I wasn't so prepared with an effective attenuation as I could have wished. She eased the situation off, however, by the charming quaintness with which she finally said: "Well, I wouldn't want him to be lonely!" This time she rose in earnest, but I persuaded her to let me keep the album to show Mr. Paraday. I assured her I'd bring it back to her myself. "Well, you'll find my address somewhere in it on a paper!" she sighed all resignedly at the door.

VIII

I blush to confess it, but I invited Mr. Paraday that very day to transcribe into the album one of his most characteristic passages. I told him how I had got rid of the strange girl who had brought it—her ominous name was Miss Hunter and she lived at an hotel; quite agreeing with him moreover as to the wisdom of getting rid with equal promptitude of the book itself. This was why I carried it to Albemarle Street no later than on the morrow. I failed to find her at home, but she wrote to me and I went again: she wanted so much to hear more about Neil Paraday. I returned repeatedly, I may briefly declare, to supply her with this information. She had been immensely taken, the more she thought of it, with that idea of mine about the act of homage: it had ended by filling her with a rapturous rapture. She positively desired to do something sublime for him, though indeed I could see that, as this particular flight was difficult, she appreciated the fact that my visits kept her up. I had it on my conscience to keep her up; I neglected nothing that would contribute to it, and her conception of our cherished author's independence became at last as fine as his very own. "Read him, read him—that will be an education

in decency," I constantly repeated; while, seeking him in his works even as God in nature, she represented herself as convinced that, according to my assurance, this was the system that had, as she expressed it, weaned her. We read him together when I could find time, and the generous creature's sacrifice was fed by our communion. There were twenty selfish women about whom I told her and who stirred her to a beautiful rage. Immediately after my first visit her sister, Mrs. Milsom, came over from Paris, and the two ladies began to present, as they called it, their letters. I thanked our stars that none had been presented to Mr. Paraday. They received invitations and dined out, and some of these occasions enabled Fanny Hunter to perform, for consistency's sake, touching feats of submission. Nothing indeed would now have induced her even to look at the object of her admiration. Once, hearing his name announced at a party, she instantly left the room by another door and then straightway quitted the house. At another time when I was at the opera with them—Mrs. Milson had invited me to their box—I attempted to point Mr. Paraday out to her in the stalls. On this she asked her sister to change places with her and, while that lady devoured the great man through a powerful glass, presented, all the rest of the evening, her inspired back to the house. To torment her tenderly I pressed the glass upon her, telling her how wonderfully near it brought our friend's handsome head. By way of answer she simply looked at me in charged silence, letting me see that tears had gathered in her eyes. These tears, I may remark, produced an effect on me of which the end is not yet. There was a moment when I felt it my duty to mention them to Neil Paraday, but I was deterred by the reflexion that there were questions more relevant to his happiness.

These questions indeed, by the end of the season, were reduced to a single one—the question of reconstituting so far as might be possible the conditions under which he had produced his best work. Such conditions could never all come back, for there was a new one that took up too much place; but some perhaps were not beyond recall. I wanted above all things to see him sit down to the subject he had, on my making his acquaintance, read me that admirable sketch of. Something told me there was no security but in his doing so before the new factor, as we used

to say at Mr. Pinhorn's, should render the problem incalculable. It only half-reassured me that the sketch itself was so copious and so eloquent that even at the worst there would be the making of a small but complete book, a tiny volume which, for the faithful, might well become an object of adoration. There would even not be wanting critics to declare, I foresaw, that the plan was a thing to be more thankful for than the structure to have been reared on it. My impatience for the structure, none the less, grew and grew with the interruptions. He had on coming up to town begun to sit for his portrait to a young painter, Mr. Rumble, whose little game, as we also used to say at Mr. Pinhorn's, was to be the first to perch on the shoulders of renown. Mr. Rumble's studio was a circus in which the man of the hour, and still more the woman, leaped through the hoops of his showy frames almost as electrically as they burst into telegrams and "specials." He pranced into the exhibitions on their back; he was the reporter on canvas, the Vandyke up to date, and there was one roaring year in which Mrs. Bounder and Miss Braby, Guy Walsingham and Dora Forbes proclaimed in chorus from the same pictured walls that no one had yet got ahead of him.

Paraday had been promptly caught and saddled, accepting with characteristic good humour his confidential hint that to figure in his show was not so much a consequence as a cause of immortality. From Mrs. Wimbush to the last "representative" who called to ascertain his twelve favourite dishes, it was the same ingenuous assumption that he would rejoice in the repercussion. There were moments when I fancied I might have had more patience with them if they hadn't been so fatally benevolent. I hated at all events Mr. Rumble's picture, and had my bottled resentment ready when, later on, I found my distracted friend had been stuffed by Mrs. Wimbush into the mouth of another cannon. A young artist in whom she was intensely interested, and who had no connexion with Mr. Rumble, was to show how far *he* could make him go. Poor Paraday, in return, was naturally to write something somewhere about the young artist. She played her victims against each other with admirable ingenuity, and her establishment was a huge machine in which the tiniest and the biggest wheels went round to the same treadle. I had a scene with her in which I tried to ex-

press that the function of such a man was to exercise his genius—not to serve as a hoarding for pictorial posters. The people I was perhaps angriest with were the editors of magazines who had introduced what they called new features, so aware were they that the newest feature of all would be to make him grind their axes by contributing his views on vital topics and taking part in the periodical prattle about the future of fiction. I made sure that before I should have done with him there would scarcely be a current form of words left me to be sick of; but meanwhile I could make surer still of my animosity to bustling ladies for whom he drew the water that irrigated their social flower-beds.

I had a battle with Mrs. Wimbush over the artist she protected, and another over the question of a certain week, at the end of July, that Mr. Paraday appeared to have contracted to spend with her in the country. I protested against this visit; I intimated that he was too unwell for hospitality without a *nuance*, for caresses without imagination; I begged he might rather take the time in some restorative way. A sultry air of promises, of ponderous parties, hung over his August, and he would greatly profit by the interval of rest. He hadn't told me he was ill again—that he had had a warning; but I hadn't needed this, for I found his reticence his worst symptom. The only thing he said to me was that he believed a comfortable attack of something or other would set him up: it would put out of the question everything but the exemptions he prized. I'm afraid I shall have presented him as a martyr in a very small cause if I fail to explain that he surrendered himself much more liberally than I surrendered him. He filled his lungs, for the most part, with the comedy of his queer fate: the tragedy was in the spectacles through which I chose to look. He was conscious of inconvenience, and above all of a great renouncement; but how could he have heard a mere dirge in the bells of his accession? The sagacity and the jealousy were mine, and his the impressions and the harvest. Of course, as regards Mrs. Wimbush, I was worsted in my encounters, for wasn't the state of his health the very reason for his coming to her at Prestidge? Wasn't it precisely at Prestidge that he was to be coddled, and wasn't the dear Princess coming to help her coddle him? The dear Princess, now on a visit to England, was of a famous foreign

house, and, in her gilded cage, with her retinue of keepers and feeders, was the most expensive specimen in the good lady's collection. I don't think her august presence had had to do with Paraday's consenting to go, but it's not impossible he had operated as a bait to the illustrious stranger. The party had been made up for him, Mrs. Wimbush averred, and every one was counting on it, the dear Princess most of all. If he was well enough he was to read them something absolutely fresh, and it was on that particular prospect the Princess had set her heart. She was so fond of genius in *any* walk of life, and was so used to it and understood it so well: she was the greatest of Mr. Paraday's admirers, she devoured everything he wrote. And then he read like an angel. Mrs. Wimbush reminded me that he had again and again given her, Mrs. Wimbush, the privilege of listening to him.

I looked at her a moment. "What has he read to you?" I crudely enquired.

For a moment too she met my eyes, and for the fraction of a moment she hesitated and coloured. "Oh all sorts of things!"

I wondered if this were an imperfect recollection or only a perfect fib, and she quite understood my unuttered comment on her measure of such things. But if she could forget Neil Paraday's beauties she could of course forget my rudeness, and three days later she invited me, by telegraph, to join the party at Prestidge. This time she might indeed have had a story about what I had given up to be near the master. I addressed from that fine residence several communications to a young lady in London, a young lady whom, I confess, I quitted with reluctance and whom the reminder of what she herself could give up was required to make me quit at all. It adds to the gratitude I owe her on other grounds that she kindly allows me to transcribe from my letters a few of the passages in which that hateful sojourn is candidly commemorated.

IX

"I suppose I ought to enjoy the joke of what's going on here," I wrote, "but somehow it doesn't amuse me. Pessimism on the contrary possesses me and cynicism deeply engages. I positively feel my own flesh sore from the brass nails in Neil Paraday's social harness. The house is full of people who like him, as they mention, awfully, and with whom his talent for talking

nonsense has prodigious success. I delight in his nonsense myself; why is it therefore that I grudge these happy folk their artless satisfaction? Mystery of the human heart—abyss of the critical spirit! Mrs. Wimbush thinks she can answer that question, and as my want of gaiety has at last worn out her patience she has given me a glimpse of her shrewd guess. I'm made restless by the selfishness of the insincere friend—I want to monopolise Paraday in order that he may push me on. To be intimate with him's a feather in my cap; it gives me an importance that I couldn't naturally pretend to, and I seek to deprive him of social refreshment because I fear that meeting more disinterested people may enlighten him as to my real motive. All the disinterested people here are his particular admirers and have been carefully selected as such. There's supposed to be a copy of his last book in the house, and in the hall I come upon ladies, in attitudes, bending gracefully over the first volume. I discreetly avert my eyes, and when I next look round the precarious joy has been superseded by the book of life. There's a sociable circle or a confidential couple, and the relinquished volume lies open on its face and as dropped under extreme coercion. Somebody else presently finds it and transfers it, with its air of momentary desolation, to another piece of furniture. Every one's asking every one about it all day, and every one's telling every one where they put it last. I'm sure it's rather smudgy about the twentieth page. I've a strong impression too that the second volume is lost—has been packed in the bag of some departing guest; and yet everybody has the impression that somebody else has read to the end. You see therefore that the beautiful book plays a great part in our existence. Why should I take the occasion of such distinguished honours to say that I begin to see deeper into Gustave Flaubert's doleful refrain about the hatred of literature? I refer you again to the perverse constitution of man.

"The Princess is a massive lady with the organisation of an athlete and the confusion of tongues of a *valet de place*.² She contrives to commit herself extraordinarily little in a great many languages, and is entertained and conversed with in detachments and relays, like an institution which goes on from generation to generation or a big building contracted for

under a forfeit. She can't have a personal taste any more than, when her husband succeeds, she can have a personal crown, and her opinion in any matter is rusty and heavy and plain—made, in the night of ages, to last and be transmitted. I feel as if I ought to 'tip' some *custode*³ for my glimpse of it. She has been told everything in the world and has never perceived anything, and the echoes of her education respond awfully to the rash footfall—I mean the casual remark—in the cold Valhalla of her memory. Mrs. Wimbush delights in her wit and says there's nothing so charming as to hear Mr. Paraday draw it out. He's perpetually detailed for this job, and he tells me it has a peculiarly exhausting effect. Every one's beginning—at the end of two days—to sidle obsequiously away from her, and Mrs. Wimbush pushes him again and again into the breach. None of the uses I have yet seen him put to infuriate me quite so much. He looks very fagged and has at last confessed to me that his condition makes him uneasy—has even promised me he'll go straight home instead of returning to his final engagements in town. Last night I had some talk with him about going to-day, cutting his visit short; so sure am I that he'll be better as soon as he's shut up in his light-house. He told me that this is what he would like to do; reminding me, however, that the first lesson of his greatness has been precisely that he can't do what he likes. Mrs. Wimbush would never forgive him if he should leave her before the Princess has received the last hand. When I hint that a violent rupture with our hostess would be the best thing in the world for him he gives me to understand that if his reason assents to the proposition his courage hangs woefully back. He makes no secret of being mortally afraid of her, and when I ask what harm she can do him that he hasn't already done he simply repeats: 'I'm afraid, I'm afraid! Don't enquire too closely,' he said last night; 'only believe that I feel a sort of terror. It's strange, when she's so kind! At any rate, I'd as soon overturn that piece of priceless Sèvres as tell her I must go before my date.' It sounds dreadfully weak, but he has some reason, and he pays for his imagination, which puts him (I should hate it) in the place of others and makes him feel, even against himself, their feelings, their appetites, their motives. It's indeed inveterately against

² Guide.

³ Custodian.

himself that he makes his imagination act. What a pity he has such a lot of it! He's too beastly intelligent. Besides, the famous reading's still to come off, and it has been postponed a day to allow Guy Walsingham to arrive. It appears this eminent lady's staying at a house a few miles off, which means of course that Mrs. Wimbush has forcibly annexed her. She's to come over in a day or two—Mrs. Wimbush wants her to hear Mr. Paraday.

"To-day's wet and cold, and several of the company, at the invitation of the Duke, have driven over to luncheon at Bigwood. I saw poor Paraday wedge himself, by command, into the little supplementary seat of a brougham in which the Princess and our hostess were already ensconced. If the front glass isn't open on his dear old back perhaps he'll survive. Bigwood, I believe, is very grand and frigid, all marble and precedence, and I wish him well out of the adventure. I can't tell you how much more and more *your* attitude to him, in the midst of all this, shines out by contrast. I never willingly talk to these people about him, but see what a comfort I find it to scribble to you! I appreciate it—it keeps me warm; there are no fires in the house. Mrs. Wimbush goes by the calendar, the temperature goes by the weather, the weather goes by God knows what, and the Princess is easily heated. I've nothing but my acrimony to restore my circulation. Coming in an hour ago I found Lady Augusta Minch rummaging about the hall. When I asked her what she was looking for she said she had mislaid something that Mr. Paraday had lent her. I ascertained in a moment that the article in question is a manuscript, and I've a foreboding that it's the noble morsel he read me six weeks ago. When I expressed my surprise that he should have bandied about anything so precious (I happen to know it's his only copy—in the most beautiful hand in all the world) Lady Augusta confessed to me that she hadn't had it from himself, but from Mrs. Wimbush, who had wished to give her a glimpse of it as a salve for her not being able to stay and hear it read.

"Is that the piece he's to read," I asked, "when Guy Walsingham arrives?"

"It's not for Guy Walsingham they're waiting now, it's Dora Forbes," Lady Augusta said. "She's coming, I believe, early to-morrow. Meanwhile Mrs. Wimbush has found out about *him*,

and is actively wiring to him. She says he also must hear him."

"You bewilder me a little," I replied; "in the age we live in one gets lost among the genders and the pronouns. The clear thing is that Mrs. Wimbush doesn't guard such a treasure so jealously as she might."

"Poor dear, she has the Princess to guard! Mr. Paraday lent her the manuscript to look over."

"She spoke, you mean, as if it were the morning paper?"

"Lady Augusta stared—my irony was lost on her. 'She didn't have time, so she gave me a chance first; because unfortunately I go to-morrow to Bigwood.'"

"And your chance has only proved a chance to lose it?"

"I haven't lost it. I remember now—it was very stupid of me to have forgotten. I told my maid to give it to Lord Dorimont—or at least to his man."

"And Lord Dorimont went away directly after luncheon."

"Of course he gave it back to my maid—or else his man did," said Lady Augusta. "I dare say it's all right."

"The conscience of these people is like a summer sea. They haven't time to 'look over' a priceless composition; they've only time to kick it about the house. I suggested that the 'man,' fired with a noble emulation, has perhaps kept the work for his own perusal; and her ladyship wanted to know whether, if the thing shouldn't reappear for the grand occasion appointed by our hostess, the author wouldn't have something else to read that would do just as well. Their questions are too delightful! I declared to Lady Augusta briefly that nothing in the world can ever do so well as the thing that does best; and at this she looked a little disconcerted. But I added that if the manuscript had gone astray our little circle would have the less of an effort of attention to make. The piece in question was very long—it would keep them three hours."

"Three hours! Oh the Princess will get up!" said Lady Augusta.

"I thought she was Mr. Paraday's greatest admirer."

"I dare say she is—she's so awfully clever. But what's the use of being a Princess—"

"If you can't dissemble your love?" I asked

as Lady Augusta was vague. She said at any rate that she'd question her maid; and I'm hoping that when I go down to dinner I shall find the manuscript has been recovered."

x

"It has *not* been recovered," I wrote early the next day, "and I'm moreover much troubled about our friend. He came back from Bigwood with a chill and, being allowed to have a fire in his room, lay down a while before dinner. I tried to send him to bed and indeed thought I had put him in the way of it; but after I had gone to dress Mrs. Wimbush came up to see him, with the inevitable result that when I returned I found him under arms and flushed and feverish, though decorated with the rare flower she had brought him for his button-hole. He came down to dinner, but Lady Augusta Minch was very shy of him. To-day he's in great pain, and the advent of *ces dames*—I mean of Guy Walsingham and Dora Forbes—doesn't at all console me. It does Mrs. Wimbush, however, for she has consented to his remaining in bed so that he may be all right to-morrow for the listening circle. Guy Walsingham's already on the scene, and the doctor for Paraday also arrived early. I haven't yet seen the author of 'Obsessions,' but of course I've had a moment by myself with the Doctor. I tried to get him to say that our invalid must go straight home—I mean to-morrow or next day; but he quite refuses to talk about the future. Absolute quiet and warmth and the regular administration of an important remedy are the points he mainly insists on. He returns this afternoon, and I'm to go back to see the patient at one o'clock, when he next takes his medicine. It consoles me a little that he certainly won't be able to read—an exertion he was already more than unfit for. Lady Augusta went off after breakfast, assuring me her first care would be to follow up the lost manuscript. I can see she thinks me a shocking busybody and doesn't understand my alarm, but she'll do what she can, for she's a good-natured woman. 'So are they all honourable men.' That was precisely what made her give the thing to Lord Dorimont and made Lord Dorimont bag it. What use *he* has for it God only knows. I've the worst forebodings, but somehow I'm strangely without passion—desperately calm. As I consider the unconscious, the

well-meaning ravages of our appreciative circle I bow my head in submission to some great natural, some universal accident; I'm rendered almost indifferent, in fact quite gay (ha-ha!) by the sense of immitigable fate. Lady Augusta promises me to trace the precious object and let me have it through the post by the time Paraday's well enough to play his part with it. The last evidence is that her maid did give it to his lordship's valet. One would suppose it some thrilling number of *The Family Budget*. Mrs. Wimbush, who's aware of the accident, is much less agitated by it than she would doubtless be were she not for the hour inevitably engrossed with Guy Walsingham."

Later in the day I informed my correspondent, for whom indeed I kept a loose diary of the situation, that I had made the acquaintance of this celebrity and that she was a pretty little girl who wore her hair in what used to be called a crop. She looked so juvenile and so innocent that if, as Mr. Morrow had announced, she was resigned to the larger latitude, her superiority to prejudice must have come to her early. I spent most of the day hovering about Neil Paraday's room, but it was communicated to me from below that Guy Walsingham, at Prestidge, was a success. Toward evening I became conscious somehow that her superiority was contagious, and by the time the company had separated for the night I was sure the larger latitude had been generally accepted. I thought of Dora Forbes and felt that he had no time to lose. Before dinner I received a telegram from Lady Augusta Minch. "Lord Dorimont thinks he must have left bundle in train—enquire." How could I enquire—if I was to take the word as a command? I was too worried and now too alarmed about Neil Paraday. The Doctor came back, and it was an immense satisfaction to me to be sure he was wise and interested. He was proud of being called to so distinguished a patient, but he admitted to me that night that my friend was gravely ill. It was really a relapse, a recrudescence of his old malady. There could be no question of moving him: we must at any rate see first, on the spot, what turn his condition would take. Meanwhile, on the morrow, he was to have a nurse. On the morrow the dear man was easier, and my spirits rose to such cheerfulness that I could almost laugh over Lady Augusta's second telegram: "Lord Dorimont's servant been to station—nothing

found. Push enquiries." I did laugh, I'm sure, as I remembered this to be the mystic scroll I had scarcely allowed poor Mr. Morrow to point his umbrella at. Fool that I had been: the thirty-seven influential journals wouldn't have destroyed it, they'd only have printed it. Of course I said nothing to Paraday.

When the nurse arrived she turned me out of the room, on which I went down stairs. I should premise that at breakfast the news that our brilliant friend was doing well excited universal complacency, and the Princess graciously remarked that he was only to be commiserated for missing the society of Miss Collop. Mrs. Wimbush, whose social gift never shone brighter than in the dry decorum with which she accepted this fizzle in her fireworks, mentioned to me that Guy Walsingham had made a very favourable impression on her Imperial Highness. Indeed I think every one did so, and that, like the money-market or the national honour, her Imperial Highness was constitutionally sensitive. There was a certain gladness, a perceptible bustle in the air, however, which I thought slightly anomalous in a house where a great author lay critically ill. "Le roy est mort—vive le roy"; I was reminded that another great author had already stepped into his shoes. When I came down again after the nurse had taken possession I found a strange gentleman hanging about the hall and pacing to and fro by the closed door of the drawing-room. This personage was florid and bald; he had a big red moustache and wore showy knickerbockers—characteristics all that fitted to my conception of the identity of Dora Forbes. In a moment I saw what had happened: the author of "The Other Way Round" had just alighted at the portals of Prestidge, but had suffered a scruple to restrain him from penetrating further. I recognized his scruple when, pausing to listen at his gesture of caution, I heard a shrill voice lifted in a sort of rhythmic uncanny chant. The famous reading had begun, only it was the author of "Obsessions" who now furnished the sacrifice. The new visitor whispered to me that he judged something was going on he oughtn't to interrupt.

"Miss Collop arrived last night," I smiled, "and the Princess has a thirst for the *inédit*."⁴

Dora Forbes raised his bushy brows. "Miss Collop?"

⁴ Unpublished.

"Guy Walsingham, your distinguished confrère—or shall I say your formidable rival?"

"Oh!" growled Dora Forbes. Then he added: "Shall I spoil it if I go in?"

5 "I should think nothing could spoil it!" I ambiguously laughed.

Dora Forbes evidently felt the dilemma; he gave an irritated crook to his moustache. "Shall I go in?" he presently asked.

10 We looked at each other hard a moment; then I expressed something bitter that was in me, expressed it in an infernal "Do!" After this I got out into the air, but not so fast as not to hear, when the door of the drawing-room opened, the disconcerted drop of Miss Collop's public manner: she must have been in the midst of the larger latitude. Producing with extreme rapidity, Guy Walsingham has just published a work in which amiable people who are not initiated have been pained to see the genius of a sister novelist held up to unmistakeable ridicule; so fresh an exhibition does it seem to them of the dreadful way men have always treated women. Dora Forbes, it's true, at the present hour, is immensely pushed by Mrs. Wimbush and has sat for his portrait to the young artists she protects, sat for it not only in oils but in monumental alabaster.

What happened at Prestidge later in the day is of course contemporary history. If the interruption I had whimsically sanctioned was almost a scandal, what is to be said of that general scatter of the company which, under the Doctor's rule, began to take place in the evening? His rule was soothing to behold, small comfort as I was to have at the end. He decreed in the interest of his patient an absolutely soundless house and a consequent break-up of the party. Little country practitioner as he was, he literally packed off the Princess. She departed as promptly as if a revolution had broken out, and Guy Walsingham emigrated with her. I was kindly permitted to remain, and this was not denied even to Mrs. Wimbush. The privilege was withheld indeed from Dora Forbes; so Mrs. Wimbush kept her latest capture temporarily concealed. This was so little, however, her usual way of dealing with her eminent friends that a couple of days of it exhausted her patience and she went up to town with him in great publicity. The sudden turn for the worse her afflicted guest had, after a brief improvement, taken on the

third night, raised an obstacle to her seeing him before her retreat; a fortunate circumstance doubtless, for she was fundamentally disappointed in him. This was not the kind of performance for which she had invited him to Prestidge, let alone invited the Princess. I must add that none of the generous acts marking her patronage of intellectual and other merit have done so much for her reputation as her lending Neil Paraday the most beautiful of her numerous homes to die in. He took advantage to the utmost of the singular favour. Day by day I saw him sink, and I roamed alone about the empty terraces and gardens. His wife never came near him, but I scarcely noticed it: as I paced there with rage in my heart I was too full of another wrong. In the event of his death it would fall to me perhaps to bring out in some charming form, with notes, with the tenderest editorial care, that precious heritage of his written project. But where *was* that precious heritage, and were both the author and the book to have been snatched from us? Lady Augusta wrote me she had done all she could and that poor Lord Dorimont, who had really been worried to death, was extremely sorry. I couldn't have the matter out with Mrs. Wimbush, for I didn't want to be taunted by her with desiring to aggrandise myself by a public connexion with Mr. Paraday's sweepings. She had signified her willingness to meet the expense of all advertising, as indeed she was always ready to do. The last night of the horrible series, the

night before he died, I put my ear closer to his pillow.

"That thing I read you that morning, you know."

5 "In your garden that dreadful day? Yes!"

"Won't it do as it is?"

"It would have been a glorious book."

"It *is* a glorious book," Neil Paraday murmured. "Print it as it stands—beautifully."

10 "Beautifully!" I passionately promised.

It may be imagined whether, now that he's gone, the promise seems to me less sacred. I'm convinced that if such pages had appeared in his lifetime the Abbey would hold him to-day. I've kept the advertising in my own hands, but the manuscript has not been recovered. It's impossible, and at any rate intolerable, to suppose it can have been wantonly destroyed. Perhaps some hazard of a blind hand, some brutal fatal ignorance has lighted kitchen-fires with it. Every stupid and hideous accident haunts my meditations. My undiscourageable search for the lost treasure would make a long chapter. Fortunately I've a devoted associate in the person of a young lady who has every day a fresh indignation and a fresh idea, and who maintains with intensity that the prize will still turn up. Sometimes I believe her, but I've quite ceased to believe it myself. The only thing for us at all events is to go on seeking and hoping together. and we should be closely united by this firm tie even were we not at present by another,

STEPHEN CRANE

1871 - 1900

He [Crane] wrote to his intimate Hilliard. . . . "For I understand that a man is born into the world with his own pair of eyes, and he is not at all responsible for his vision—he is merely responsible for his quality of personal honesty. To keep close to this personal honesty is my supreme ambition. . . ."

—THOMAS BEER, *Stephen Crane* (1923), pp. 232–233.

Stephen Crane was born at Newark, New Jersey, on November 1, 1871. His father was a Methodist minister with eight older children. His mother's theory that no child should be afraid of anything was probably misapplied in the case of the delicate boy. "She took him," says Thomas Beer, "to the religious frolics at Ocean Grove where he saw the waves from the beach and had an atrocious dream of black riders on black horses charging at him from the long surf up the shore and so awoke screaming, night after night." "Let it be stated," continues Beer, "that the mistress of this boy's mind was fear. His search in æsthetic was governed by terror as that of tamer men is governed by the desire of women." The boy came to hate the religion of his parents.

He spent two years at a preparatory school, a year at Lafayette College, and part of a year at Syracuse University. He played baseball, but he was not the star baseball pitcher that his biographers have made him out. (See Claude Jones, "Stephen Crane at Syracuse," *American Literature*, VII, 82–84, March, 1935.) By this time he was reading Tolstoy's *Sevastopol* and Flaubert's *Salammbô* and perhaps something from Guy de Maupassant. He was beginning to develop as a prose writer, but he did not make a successful newspaper reporter. He became deeply interested in life along the Bowery, which was at that time one of the worst places in New York. He wrote his novelette, *Maggie: A Girl of the Street*; but, unable to find a publisher for it, he borrowed money and had it printed under the pseudonym "Johnston Smith." Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *Century Magazine* and a friend of Crane's family, read the story in manuscript. Somewhat shocked by the freedom with which Crane had treated matters pertaining to sex, Gilder began criticizing the manuscript, but Crane cut him short with the question: "You mean that the story's too honest?" William Dean Howells tried without success to get certain publishers to bring out the book, which was not done until Crane's later work had made him well known.

It was *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) that brought something like fame to Crane, although the syndicate to which he sold the story gave him less than a hundred dollars for it. In this story of the Civil War, Crane, who as yet had had no experience of war, wrote a vivid account of a soldier's first experience under fire. The Appletons now brought out *Maggie* in a new edition. Crane went to the West to write for a syndicate; then to Cuba on a filibustering expedition; and to Greece to report the Greco-Turkish War. Back in America, he married Cora Taylor and then sailed for England. It was in England that he became a friend of Joseph Conrad, who wrote the introduction for Thomas Beer's biography. In England he took a big house in the country which was so overrun by visitors that he found it difficult to write. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, the New York *World* sent him to Cuba, where he distinguished himself for coolness under fire. His health now broken, disgusted with malicious gossip about his supposed dissipation, he returned to England. He died of tuberculosis on June 5, 1900, less than twenty-nine years old.

"Modern American fiction may be said to begin with Stephen Crane," say Carl and Mark Van Doren in their *American and British Literature since 1890*. He wrote naturalistic fiction without having read widely in the continental literatures. In his literary treatment of war and the slums he has had many followers. As our selections we have chosen "An Experiment in Misery," which Ludwig Lewisohn regards as the best of his tales, and also the well-known "The Open Boat." Of this story Crane wrote: "In a story of mine called 'An Experiment in Misery' I tried to make plain that the root of Bowery life is a sort of cowardice. Perhaps I mean a lack of ambition or to willingly be knocked flat and accept the licking."

In his own lifetime Crane's poems were not favorably received. Even then readers of poetry were not reconciled to free verse. To Hamlin Garland, Crane's poems "suggested some of the French translations of Japanese verses [and] the sting and compression of Emily Dickinson's verse." In fact, Howells had read to Crane some of her poems before he began to write verse.

Wilson Follett edited *The Work of Stephen Crane* in twelve volumes in 1926. Several of his volumes can be bought separately in various inexpensive editions. Thomas Beer's *Stephen Crane* (1923) is an eminently readable biography. See also Hamlin Garland, *Roadside Meetings* (1930), Chapter XVI. There are bibliographies by Vincent Starrett and B. J. R. Stolper. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1930. For critical materials published in magazines, see Lewis Leary, *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

POEM

from THE BLACK RIDERS AND
OTHER LINES (1895)

x

Should the wide world roll away,
Leaving black terror,
Limitless night,
Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
Would be to me essential,
If thou and thy white arms were there,
And the fall to doom a long way.

THE OPEN BOAT*
(1898)

A TALE INTENDED TO BE AFTER THE FACT: BEING
THE EXPERIENCE OF FOUR MEN FROM THE
SUNK STEAMER COMMODORE

I

None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks. Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small-boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: "Gawd! That was a narrow clip." As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the

stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he commanded for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

"Keep 'er a little more south, Billie," said he.

"A little more south,' sir," said the oiler in the stern.

A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slatey wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last

* Reprinted from *Twenty Stories* by Stephen Crane, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1925, by William H. Crane.

effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtless have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had not time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the color of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the color of the waves that rolled toward them.

In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: "There's a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they'll come off in their boat and pick us up."

"As soon as who see us?" said the correspondent.

"The crew," said the cook.

"Houses of refuge don't have crews," said the correspondent. "As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crews."

"Oh, yes, they do," said the cook.

"No, they don't," said the correspondent.

"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler, in the stern.

"Well," said the cook, "perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I'm thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it's a life-saving station."

"We're not there yet," said the oiler, in the stern.

II

As the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray splashed past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-

riven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.

"Bully good thing it's an on-shore wind," said the cook. "If not, where would we be? Wouldn't have a show."

"That's right," said the correspondent.

The busy oiler nodded his assent.

Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humor, contempt, tragedy, all in one. "Do you think we've got much of a show now, boys?" said he.

Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their minds. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.

"Oh, well," said the captain, soothing his children, "we'll get ashore all right."

But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: "Yes! If this wind holds!"

The cook was bailing: "Yes! If we don't catch hell in the surf."

Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown seaweed that rolled on the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain's head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken-fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain's head. "Ugly brute," said the oiler to the bird. "You look as if you were made with a jackknife." The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare do it, because anything re-

sembling an emphatic gesture would have cap-sized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on account of his hair, and others breathed easier because the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow grewsome and ominous.

In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed. And also they rowed.

They sat together in the same seat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sèvres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with the most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried: "Look out now! Steady there!"

The brown mats of seaweed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were traveling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.

The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the lighthouse at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.

"See it?" said the captain.

"No," said the correspondent slowly, "I didn't see anything."

"Look again," said the captain. He pointed. "It's exactly in that direction."

At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin.

5 It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny.

"Think we'll make it, captain?"

"If this wind holds and the boat don't swamp, we can't do much else," said the captain.

10 The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of seaweed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top-up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.

"Bail her, cook," said the captain serenely.

"All right, captain," said the cheerful cook.

III

20 It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said it was so. No one mentioned it.

35 "I wish we had a sail," remarked the captain. "We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest." So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.

50 Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed color,

and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.

At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. "We must be about opposite New Smyrna," said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. "Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago."

"Did they?" said the captain.

The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.

Shipwrecks are *à propos* of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.

For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.

"Take her easy, now, boys," said the captain. "Don't spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you'll need all your strength, because we'll sure have to swim for it. Take your time."

Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line

of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. "That's the house of refuge, sure," said the cook. "They'll see us before long, and come out after us."

The distant lighthouse reared high. "The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he's looking through a glass," said the captain. "He'll notify the life-saving people."

"None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck," said the oiler, in a low voice. "Else the life-boat would be out hunting us."

Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. "We'll never be able to make the lighthouse now," said the captain. "Swing her head a little more north, Billie," said he.

"A little more north,' sir," said the oiler.

Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.

Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scathless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

IV

"Cook," remarked the captain, "there don't seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge."

"No," replied the cook. "Funny they don't see us!"

A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the

eyes of the men. It was of dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. "Funny they don't see us," said the men.

The surf's roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. "We'll swamp sure," said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation's life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

"Funny they don't see us."

The lightheartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

"Well," said the captain, ultimately, "I suppose we'll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we'll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps."

And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscle. There was some thinking.

"If we don't all get ashore——" said the captain. "If we don't all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?"

They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: "If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?"

It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd. . . . But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work." Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: "Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!"

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingey could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. "Boys," he said swiftly, "she won't live three minutes more, and we're too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?"

"Yes! Go ahead!" said the captain.

This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. "Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now."

The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

"What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain't they peaches?"

"Funny they haven't seen us."

"Maybe they think we're out here for sport! Maybe they think we're fishin'. Maybe they think we're damned fools."

It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but the wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coast-line, sea, and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.

"St. Augustine?"

The captain shook his head. "Too near Mosquito Inlet."

And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.

"Did you ever like to row, Billie?" asked the correspondent.

"No," said the oiler. "Hang it!"

When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea-water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.

"Look! There's a man on the shore!"

"Where?"

"There! See 'im? See 'im?"

"Yes, sure! He's walking along."

"Now he's stopped. Look! He's facing us!"

"He's waving at us!"

"So he is! By thunder!"

"Ah, now we're all right! Now we're all right! There'll be a boat out here for us in half-an-hour."

"He's going on. He's running. He's going up to that house there."

The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.

"What's he doing now?"

"He's standing still again. He's looking, I think. . . . There he goes again. Toward the house. . . . Now he's stopped again."

"Is he waving at us?"

"No, not now! he was, though."

"Look! There comes another man!"

"He's running."

"Look at him go, would you."

5 "Why, he's on a bicycle. Now he's met the other man. They're both waving at us. Look!"

"There comes something up the beach."

"What the devil is that thing?"

"Why it looks like a boat."

"Why, certainly it's a boat."

10 "No, it's on wheels."

"Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon."

"That's the life-boat, sure."

"No, by ——, it's—it's an omnibus."

15 "I tell you it's a life-boat."

"It is not! It's an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses."

20 "By thunder, you're right. It's an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?"

25 "That's it, likely. Look! There's a fellow waving a little black flag. He's standing on the steps of the omnibus. There comes those other two fellows. Now they're all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain't waving it."

"That ain't a flag, is it? That's his coat. Why, certainly, that's his coat."

30 "So it is. It's his coat. He's taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it."

"Oh, say, there isn't any life-saving station there. That's just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown."

"What's that idiot with the coat mean? What's he signaling, anyhow?"

40 "It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there."

"No! He thinks we're fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie!"

45 "Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?"

"He don't mean anything. He's just playing."

50 "Well, if he'd just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north, or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!"

"There come more people."

"Now there's quite a mob. Look! Isn't that a boat?"

"Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that's no boat."

"That fellow is still waving his coat."

"He must think we like to see him do that. Why don't he quit it? It don't mean anything."

"I don't know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there's a life-saving station there somewhere."

"Say, he ain't tired yet. Look at 'im wave."

"Wonder how long he can keep that up. He's been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He's an idiot. Why aren't they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don't he do something?"

"Oh, it's all right, now."

"They'll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they've seen us."

A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.

"Holy smoke!" said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, "if we keep on monkeying out here! If we've got to flounder out here all night!"

"Oh, we'll never have to stay here all night! Don't you worry. They've seen us now, and it won't be long before they'll come chasing out after us."

The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink and swear like men who were being branded.

"I'd like to catch the chump who waved the coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck."

"Why? What did he do?"

"Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful."

In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star ap-

peared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come this far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?"

The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.

"Keep her head up! Keep her head up!"

"'Keep her head up,' sir." The voices were weary and low.

This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat's bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.

The cook's head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. "Billie," he murmured, dreamfully, "what kind of pie do you like best?"

V

"Pie," said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. "Don't talk about those things, blast you!"

"Well, said the cook, "I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—"

A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.

Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingy that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired

oarsmen, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.

The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.

The oiler plied the oars until his head dropped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. "Will you spell me for a little while?" he said, meekly.

"Sure, Billie," said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook's side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.

The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.

In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. "Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?"

The same steady voice answered him. "Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow."

The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labor, dropped down to sleep.

The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping under-foot. The cook's arm was around the oiler's shoulders, and, with their fragmentary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.

Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and

a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.

"Oh, I'm awful sorry, Billie," said the correspondent contritely.

"That's all right, old boy," said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.

Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.

There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.

Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.

The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whirloo of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.

The presence of this bidding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.

Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over

the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

VI

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?"

During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.

Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands suppliant, saying: "Yes, but I love myself."

A high cold star on a winter's night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.

The men in the dingy had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.

To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent's head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.

*"A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was a lack of woman's nursing, there was
dearth of woman's tears;
But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that
comrade's hand,
And he said: 'I shall never see my own, my native
land.'"*

In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier's plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil's point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.

The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.

The thing which had followed the boat and waited, had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the splash of the cut-water, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes the boom of the surf rang in the correspondent's ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, some one had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.

The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. "Pretty long night," he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the

shore. "Those life-saving people take their time."

"Did you see that shark playing around?"

"Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right."

"Wish I had known you were awake."

Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.

"Billie!" There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. "Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook's life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. "Will you spell me?"

"Sure, Billie."

The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.

Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. "We'll give those boys a chance to get into shape again," said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary chatterings and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.

As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.

"Boys," said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, "she's drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again." The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.

As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. "If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar—"

At last there was a short conversation.

"Billie. . . . Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

VII

When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendor, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.

On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.

The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. "Well," said the captain, "if no help is coming we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all." The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.

"Now, boys," said the captain, "she is going to swamp, sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don't jump until she swamps sure."

The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he

scanned the surf. "Captain," he said, "I think I'd better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in."

"All right, Billie," said the captain. "Back her in." The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.

The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. "We won't get in very close," said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.

As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.

There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply looked at the shore. "Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump," said the captain.

Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.

"Steady now," said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the wave. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.

But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling, boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.

The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.

"Bail her out, cook! Bail her out," said the captain.

"All right, captain," said the cook.

"Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure," said the oiler. "Mind to jump clear of the boat."

The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of life-belt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.

The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it on the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow so mixed and confused with his opinion of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.

When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent's left, the cook's great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.

There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.

It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a hand-sled.

But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.

As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, "Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar."

"All right, sir." The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.

Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared

like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent marvelled that the captain could still hold to it.

They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.

The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Holland.

He thought: “I am going to drown? Can it be possible? Can it be possible? Can it be possible?” Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.

But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small, deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. “Come to the boat! Come to the boat!”

In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some months had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.

Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.

“Come to the boat,” called the captain.

“All right, captain.” As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An over-turned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.

The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.

Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded towards the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent's hand. The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulæ, said: “Thanks, old man.” But suddenly the man cried: “What's that?” He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: “Go.”

In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.

The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.

It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffee-pots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land's welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.

When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

HENRY ADAMS

1838 - 1918

. . . the Adamses have a genius for saying even a gracious thing in an ungracious way. The Adams flavor is as unmistakable as that of the Catawba grape. It won't out of the wine, do what you will. I rather like it. It reminds me of New England woods. 'Tis the conscience we have inherited from our Puritan forebears (*ursa novanglica*).

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL TO MRS. R. W. GILDER, June 26, 1891.

Henry (Brooks) Adams never forgot that he was an Adams of Massachusetts—the great-grandson of one President, the grandson of another, and the son of the Ambassador to England during the Civil War. There is truth in Ludwig Lewisohn's judgment: "The man was both poet and philosopher, and dared till his old age to be neither. That was his tragedy. By a sort of ancestral convention he went on assuming that politicians were important. . . ." He had wanted to enlist in the army in 1861, but gave in to his father's wishes and became secretary to his father at the American Embassy in London until 1868. When he returned to America, there seemed no place in the political world of the Dreadful Decade for an Adams. Finally he accepted a position as teacher of medieval history at Harvard. He edited the *North American Review* at the same time. After seven years he resigned. Except for his travels to various parts of the world, he spent the remainder of his life in Washington, D. C. Here he was a spectator rather than a participant in national affairs. In *My Friendship with Roosevelt* Owen Wister records this bit of dialogue between Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and himself:

"If the country had put him on a pedestal," said Holmes to me once, "I think Henry Adams with his gifts could have rendered distinguished public service."

"What was the matter with Henry Adams?" I asked.

"He wanted it handed to him on a silver plate," said Holmes.

In 1880 he published anonymously a novel, *Democracy*, which had some vogue. As an exposure of political corruption in Congress, it has some value, but it is a poor novel. He published biographies of Albert Gallatin (1879) and John Randolph (1882) and *A History of the United States* (1889–1891), covering the period 1801–1817.

The two books on which his literary fame rests came late in life, and both were first printed privately because he did not think the public would care for them. At the request of the American Institute of Architects he permitted that body in 1912 to publish his *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904). The general reader has cared little for Adams's dynamic theory of history, which has a place also in his next book, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), to

which William MacDonald has referred as "an extraordinary record of intellectual and moral aimlessness crossed with inherited inhibitions." When published in 1918, the year of Adams's death, the book fitted in with certain tendencies that were beginning to be felt. "The younger generation," says Allen Johnson, "sensed that he was one of them, a rebel against the conventions of education and an intrepid spirit daring to face this 'sorry scheme of things entire.'"

There is a life of Henry Adams by James Truslow Adams (1933) and an excellent study by Ernest Samuels, *The Young Henry Adams* (1948). Worthington C. Ford (ed.), *Letters of Henry Adams* (1938) gives a somewhat different picture of Adams from that one gets from reading *The Education*. Adams's novel, *Esther* (1884), was reprinted in 1938 with an introduction by Robert E. Spiller who also wrote the chapter on Adams in the *Literary History of the United States* (1948). See also two articles in *American Literature*: Robert A. Hume, "The Style and Background of Henry Adams," XVI, 296-315 (January, 1947), and Richard F. Miller, "Henry Adams and the Influence of Woman," XVIII, 291-298 (January, 1945). Other materials are listed in Lewis Leary (ed.), *Articles on American Literature . . .* (1947).

from MONT-SAINT-MICHEL AND
CHARTRES* (1904)

"*Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* is a beautiful book, the more beautiful because of its wistfulness; and the theme that runs through its pages is a denial of the values that embodied for his countrymen the sum of all excellence. . . .

"The profound suggestiveness of *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* lies in the skill with which the brilliant threads of medieval art and thought and aspiration are woven into a single pattern, and the splendor of its unity traced to a mystical *élan* that found its highest expression in faith. . . . To one who entered those bygone times through the portals of Chartres cathedral, it was natural to interpret the total age in the light of the gentle smile of the Mother of God, and to feel her presence as a transforming spirit amongst men" (V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III, 221-222).

CHAPTER VI. THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES

- - - The Queen Mother was as majestic as you like; she was absolute; she could be stern; she was not above being angry; but she was still a woman, who loved grace, beauty, ornament,—her toilette, robes, jewels;—who considered the arrangements of her palace with attention, and liked both light and colour; who kept a keen eye on her Court, and exacted prompt and willing

obedience from king and archbishops as well as from beggars and drunken priests. She protected her friends and punished her enemies. She required space, beyond what was known in the Courts of kings, because she was liable at all times to have ten thousand people begging her for favours—mostly inconsistent with law—and deaf to refusal. She was extremely sensitive to neglect, to disagreeable impressions, to want of intelligence in her surroundings. She was the greatest artist, as she was the greatest philosopher and musician and theologian, that ever lived on earth, except her Son, Who, at Chartres, is still an Infant under her guardianship. Her taste was infallible; her sentence eternally final. This church was built for her in this spirit of simple-minded, practical, utilitarian faith,—in this singleness of thought, exactly as a little girl sets up a doll-house for her favourite blonde doll. Unless you can go back to your dolls, you are out of place here. If you can go back to them, and get rid for one small hour of the weight of custom, you shall see Chartres in glory.

The palaces of earthly queens were hovels compared with these palaces of the Queen of Heaven at Chartres, Paris, Laon, Noyon, Rheims, Amiens, Rouen, Bayeux, Coutances,—a list that might be stretched into a volume. The nearest approach we have made to a palace was the Merveille at Mont-Saint-Michel, but no Queen had a

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palace equal to that. The Merveille was built, or designed, about the year 1200; toward the year 1500, Louis XI built a great castle at Loches in Touraine, and there Queen Anne de Bretagne had apartments which still exist, and which we will visit. At Blois you shall see the residence which served for Catherine de Medicis till her death in 1589. Anne de Bretagne was trebly queen, and Catherine de Medicis took her standard of comfort from the luxury of Florence. At Versailles you can see the apartments which the queens of the Bourbon line occupied through their century of magnificence. All put together, and then trebled in importance, could not rival the splendour of any single cathedral dedicated to Queen Mary in the thirteenth century; and of them all, Chartres was built to be peculiarly and exceptionally her delight.

One has grown so used to this sort of loose comparison, this reckless waste of words, that one no longer adopts an idea unless it is driven in with hammers of statistics and columns of figures. With the irritating demand for literal exactness and perfectly straight lines which lights up every truly American eye, you will certainly ask when this exaltation of Mary began, and unless you get the dates, you will doubt the facts. It is your own fault if they are tiresome; you might easily read them all in the "Iconographie de la Sainte Vierge," by M. Rohault de Fleury, published in 1878. You can start at Byzantium with the Empress Helena in 326, or with the Council of Ephesus in 431. You will find the Virgin acting as the patron saint of Constantinople and of the Imperial residence, under as many names as Artemis or Aphrodite had borne. As Godmother (*θεομητηρ*), Deipara (*θεοτοκος*) Pathfinder (*Ὁδηγητρια*), she was the chief favourite of the Eastern Empire, and her picture was carried at the head of every procession and hung on the wall of every hut and hovel, as it is still wherever the Greek Church goes. In the year 610, when Heraclitus sailed from Carthage to dethrone Phocas at Constantinople, his ships carried the image of the Virgin at their mast-heads. In 1143, just before the flèche on the Chartres clocher was begun, the Basileus John Comnenus died, and so devoted was he to the Virgin that, on a triumphal entry into Constantinople, he put the image of the Mother of God in his chariot, while he himself walked. In the Western Church the Virgin had always been

highly honoured, but it was not until the crusades that she began to overshadow the Trinity itself. Then her miracles became more frequent and her shrines more frequented, so that Chartres, soon after 1100, was rich enough to build its western portal with Byzantine splendour. - - -

Saint Bernard was emotional and to a certain degree mystical, like Adam de Saint-Victor, whose hymns were equally famous, but the emotional saints and mystical poets were not by any means allowed to establish exclusive rights to the Virgin's favour. Abélard was as devoted as they were, and wrote hymns as well. Philosophy claimed her, and Albert the Great, the head of scholasticism, the teacher of Thomas Aquinas, decided in her favour the question: "Whether the Blessed Virgin possessed perfectly the seven liberal arts." The Church at Chartres had decided it a hundred years before by putting the seven liberal arts next her throne, with Aristotle himself to witness; but Albertus gave the reason: "I hold that she did, for it is written, 'Wisdom has built herself a house, and has sculptured seven columns.' That house is the blessed Virgin; the seven columns are the seven liberal arts. Mary, therefore, had perfect mastery of science." Naturally she had also perfect mastery of economics, and most of her great churches were built in economic centres. The guilds were, if possible, more devoted to her than the monks; the bourgeoisie of Paris, Rouen, Amiens, Laon, spent money by millions to gain her favour. Most surprising of all, the great military class was perhaps the most vociferous. Of all inappropriate haunts for the gentle, courteous, pitying Mary, a field of battle seems to be the worst, if not distinctly blasphemous; yet the greatest French warriors insisted on her leading them into battle, and in the actual mêlée when men were killing each other, on every battlefield in Europe, for at least five hundred years, Mary was present, leading both sides. The battle-cry of the famous Constable du Guesclin was "Notre-Dame-Guesclin"; "Notre-Dame-Coucy" was the cry of the great Sires de Coucy; "Notre-Dame-Auxerre"; "Notre-Dame Sancerre"; "Notre - Dame - Hainault"; "Notre-Dame-Gueldres"; "Notre-Dame-Bourbon"; "Notre-Dame-Bearn";—all well-known battle-cries. The King's own battle at one time cried, "Notre-Dame-Saint-Denis-Montjoie"; the Dukes of Burgundy cried, "Notre-Dame-Bour-

gogne"; and even the soldiers of the Pope were said to cry, "Notre-Dame-Saint-Pierre."

The measure of this devotion, which proves to any religious American mind, beyond possible cavil, its serious and practical reality, is the money it cost. According to statistics, in the single century between 1170 and 1270, the French built eighty cathedrals and nearly five hundred churches of the cathedral class, which would have cost, according to an estimate made in 1840, more than five thousand millions to replace. Five thousand million francs is a thousand million dollars, and this covered only the great churches of a single century. The same scale of expenditure had been going on since the year 1000, and almost every parish in France had rebuilt its church in stone; to this day France is strewn with the ruins of this architecture, and yet the still preserved churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, among the churches that belong to the Romanesque and Transition period, are numbered by hundreds until they reach well into the thousands. The share of this capital which was—if one may use a commercial figure—invested in the Virgin cannot be fixed, any more than the total sum given to religious objects between 1000 and 1300; but in a spiritual and artistic sense, it was almost the whole, and expressed an intensity of conviction never again reached by any passion, whether of religion, of loyalty, of patriotism, or of wealth; perhaps never even paralleled by any single economic effort, except in war. Nearly every great church of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries belonged to Mary, until in France one asks for the church of Notre Dame as though it meant cathedral; but, not satisfied with this, she contracted the habit of requiring in all churches a chapel of her own, called in English the "Lady Chapel," which was apt to be as large as the church but was always meant to be handsomer; and there, behind the high altar, in her own private apartment, Mary sat, receiving her innumerable suppliants, and ready at any moment to step up upon the high altar itself to support the tottering authority of the local saint.

Expenditure like this rests invariably on an economic idea. Just as the French of the nineteenth century invested their surplus capital in a railway system in the belief that they would make money by it in this life, in the thirteenth they trusted their money to the Queen of Heaven because of their belief in her power to

repay it with interest in the life to come. The investment was based on the power of Mary as Queen rather than on any orthodox Church conception of the Virgin's legitimate station. Papal Rome never greatly loved Byzantine empresses or French queens. The Virgin of Chartres was never wholly sympathetic to the Roman Curia. To this day the Church writers—like the Abbé Bulteau or M. Rohault de Fleury—are singularly shy of the true Virgin of majesty, whether at Chartres or at Byzantium or wherever she is seen. The fathers Martin and Cahier at Bourges alone felt her true value. Had the Church controlled her, the Virgin would perhaps have remained prostrate at the foot of the Cross. Dragged by a Byzantine Court, backed by popular insistence and impelled by overpowering self-interest, the Church accepted the Virgin throned and crowned, seated by Christ, the Judge throned and crowned; but even this did not wholly satisfy the French of the thirteenth century who seemed bent on absorbing Christ in His Mother, and making the Mother the Church, and Christ the Symbol. - - -

Constantly—one might better say at once, officially, she was addressed in these terms of supreme majesty: "Imperatrix supernorum!" "Cœli Reginal!" "Aula regalis!"¹ but the twelfth century seemed determined to carry the idea out to its logical conclusion in defiance of dogma. Not only was the Son absorbed in the Mother, or represented as under her guardianship, but the Father fared no better, and the Holy Ghost followed. The poets regarded the Virgin as the "Templum Trinitatis"; "totius Trinitatis nobile Triclinium."² She was the refectory of the Trinity—the "Triclinium"—because the refectory was the largest room and contained the whole of the members, and was divided into three parts by two rows of columns. She was the "Templum Trinitatis," the Church itself, with its triple aisle. The Trinity was absorbed in her.

This is a delicate subject in the Church, and you must feel it with delicacy, without brutally insisting on its necessary contradictions. All theology and all philosophy are full of contradictions quite as flagrant and far less sympathetic. This particular variety of religious faith is simply

¹ "Empress of the celestial!" "Queen of Heaven!" "Royal power!"

² "Temple of the Trinity"; "Noble refectory of the complete Trinity."

human, and has made its appearance in one form or another in nearly all religions; but though the twelfth century carried it to an extreme, and at Chartres you see it in its most charming expression, we have got always to make allowances for what was going on beneath the surface in men's minds, consciously or unconsciously, and for the latent scepticism which lurks behind all faith. The Church itself never quite accepted the full claims of what was called Mariolatry. One may be sure, too, that the bourgeois capitalist and the student of the schools, each from his own point of view, watched the Virgin with anxious interest. The bourgeois had put an enormous share of his capital into what was in fact an economical speculation, not unlike the South Sea Scheme, or the railway system of our own time; except that in one case the energy was devoted to shortening the road to Heaven; in the other, to shortening the road to Paris; but no serious schoolman could have felt entirely convinced that God would enter into a business partnership with man, to establish a sort of joint-stock society for altering the operation of divine and universal laws. The bourgeois cared little for the philosophical doubt if the economical result proved to be good, but he watched this result with his usual practical sagacity, and required an experience of only about three generations (1200-1300) to satisfy himself that relics were not certain in their effects; that the Saints were not always able or willing to help; that Mary herself could not certainly be bought or bribed; that prayer without money seemed to be quite as efficacious as prayer with money; and that neither the road to Heaven nor Heaven itself had been made surer or brought nearer by an investment of capital which amounted to the best part of the wealth of France. Economically speaking, he became satisfied that his enormous money-investment had proved to be an almost total loss, and the reaction on his mind was as violent as the emotion. For three hundred years it prostrated France. The efforts of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry to recover their property, so far as it was recoverable, have lasted to the present day and we had best take care not to get mixed in those passions.

If you are to get the full enjoyment of Chartres, you must, for the time, believe in Mary as Bernard and Adam did, and feel her presence as the

architects did, in every stone they placed, and every touch they chiselled. You must try first to rid your mind of the traditional idea that the Gothic is an intentional expression of religious gloom. The necessity for light was the motive of the Gothic architects. They needed light and always more light, until they sacrificed safety and common sense in trying to get it. They converted their walls into windows, raised their vaults, diminished their piers, until their churches could no longer stand. You will see the limits at Beauvais; at Chartres we have not got so far, but even here, in places where the Virgin wanted it,—as above the high altar,—the architect has taken all the light there was to take. For the same reason, fenestration became the most important part of the Gothic architect's work, and at Chartres was uncommonly interesting because the architect was obliged to design a new system, which should at the same time satisfy the laws of construction and the taste and imagination of Mary. No doubt the first command of the Queen of Heaven was for light, but the second, at least equally imperative, was for colour. Any earthly queen, even though she were not Byzantine in taste, loved colour; and the truest of queens—the only true Queen of Queens—had richer and finer taste in colour than the queens of fifty earthly kingdoms, as you will see when we come to the immense effort to gratify her in the glass of her windows. Illusion for illusion,—granting for the moment that Mary was an illusion,—the Virgin Mother in this instance repaid to her worshippers a larger return for their money than the capitalist has ever been able to get, at least in this world, from any other illusion of wealth which he has tried to make a source of pleasure and profit.

The next point on which Mary evidently insisted was the arrangement for her private apartments, the apse, as distinguished from her throne-room, the choir; both being quite distinct from the hall, or reception-room of the public, which was the nave with its enlargements in the transepts. This arrangement marks the distinction between churches built as shrines for the deity and churches built as halls of worship for the public. The difference is chiefly in the apse, and the apse of Chartres is the most interesting of all apses from this point of view.

The Virgin required chiefly these three things, or, if you like, these four: space, light, con-

venience; and colour decoration to unite and harmonize the whole. This concerns the interior; on the exterior she required statuary, and the only complete system of decorative sculpture that existed seems to belong to her churches:—Paris, Rheims, Amiens, and Chartres. Mary required all this magnificence at Chartres for herself alone, not for the public. As far as one can see into the spirit of the builders, Chartres was exclusively intended for the Virgin, as the Temple of Abydos was intended for Osiris. The wants of man, beyond a mere roof-cover, and perhaps space to some degree, enter to no very great extent into the problem of Chartres. Man came to render homage or to ask favours. The Queen received him in her palace, where she alone was at home, and alone gave commands.

The artist's second thought was to exclude from his work everything that could displease Mary; and since Mary differed from living queens only in infinitely greater majesty and refinement, the artist could admit only what pleased the actual taste of the great ladies who dictated taste at the Courts of France and England, which surrounded the little Court of the Counts of Chartres. What they were—these women of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—we shall have to see or seek in other directions; but Chartres is perhaps the most magnificent and permanent monument they left of their taste, and we can begin here with learning certain things which they were not.

In the first place, they were not in the least vague, dreamy, or mystical in a modern sense;—far from it! They seemed anxious only to throw the mysteries into a blaze of light; not so much physical, perhaps,—since they, like all women, liked moderate shadow for their toilettes,—but luminous in the sense of faith. There is nothing about Chartres that you would think mystical, who know your Lohengrin, Siegfried, and Parsifal. If you care to make a study of the whole literature of the subject, read M. Mâle's "*Art Religieux du XIII^e Siècle en France*," and use it for a guide-book. Here you need only note how symbolic and how simple the sculpture is, on the portals and porches. Even what seems a grotesque or an abstract idea is no more than the simplest child's personification. On the walls you may have noticed the *Ane qui vielle*,—the ass playing the lyre; and on all the old churches you can see "*bestiaries*," as they were called, of fabu-

lous animals, symbolic or not; but the symbolism is as simple as the realism of the oxen at Laon. It gave play to the artist in his effort for variety of decoration, and it amused the people,—probably the Virgin also was not above being amused;—now and then it seems about to suggest what you would call an esoteric meaning, that is to say, a meaning which each one of us can consider private property reserved for our own amusement, and from which the public is excluded; yet, in truth, in the Virgin's churches the public is never excluded, but invited. The Virgin even had the additional charm to the public that she was popularly supposed to have no very marked fancy for priests as such; she was a queen, a woman, and a mother, functions, all, which priests could not perform. Accordingly, she seems to have had little taste for mysteries of any sort, and even the symbols that seem most mysterious were clear to every old peasant-woman in her church. The most pleasing and promising of them all is the woman's figure you saw on the front of the cathedral in Paris; her eyes bandaged; her head bent down; her crown falling; without cloak or royal robe; holding in her hand a guidon or banner with its staff broken in more than one place. On the opposite pier stands another woman, with royal mantle, erect and commanding. The symbol is so graceful that one is quite eager to know its meaning; but every child in the Middle Ages would have instantly told you that the woman with the falling crown meant only the Jewish Synagogue, as the one with the royal robe meant the Church of Christ.

Another matter for which the female taste seemed not much to care was theology in the metaphysical sense. Mary troubled herself little about theology except when she retired into the south transept with Pierre de Dreux. Even there one finds little said about the Trinity, always the most metaphysical subtlety of the Church. Indeed, you might find much amusement here in searching the cathedral for any distinct expression at all of the Trinity as a dogma recognized by Mary. - - -

The church is wholly given up to the Mother and the Son. The Father seldom appears; the Holy Ghost still more rarely. At least, this is the impression made on an ordinary visitor who has no motive to be orthodox; and it must have been the same with the thirteenth-century worshipper who came here with his mind absorbed in the

perfections of Mary. Chartres represents, not the Trinity, but the identity of the Mother and Son. The Son represents the Trinity, which is thus absorbed in the Mother. The idea is not orthodox, but this is no affair of ours. The Church watches over its own.

The Virgin's wants and tastes, positive and negative, ought now to be clear enough to enable you to feel the artist's sincerity in trying to satisfy them; but first you have still to convince yourselves of the people's sincerity in employing the artists. This point is the easiest of all, for the evidence is express. In the year 1145 when the old flèche was begun,—the year before Saint Bernard preached the second crusade at Vézelay,—Abbot Haimon, of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives in Normandy, wrote to the monks of Tutbury Abbey in England, a famous letter to tell of the great work which the Virgin was doing in France and which began at the Church of Chartres. "Hujus sacræ institutionis ritus apud Carnotensem ecclesiam est inchoatus."³ From Chartres it had spread through Normandy, where it produced among other things the beautiful spire which we saw at Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives. "Postremo per totam fere Normanniam longe lateque convaluit ac loca per singula Matri misericordiæ dicata præcipue occupavit."⁴ The movement affected especially the places devoted to Mary, but ran through all Normandy, far and wide. Of all Mary's miracles, the best attested, next to the preservation of her church, is the building of it; not so much because it surprises us as because it surprised even more the people of the time and the men who were its instruments. Such deep popular movements are always surprising, and at Chartres the miracle seems to have occurred three times, coinciding more or less with the dates of the crusades, and taking the organization of a crusade, as Archbishop Hugo of Rouen described it in a letter to Bishop Thierry of Amiens. The most interesting part of this letter is the evident astonishment of the writer, who might be talking to us to-day, so modern is he:—

The inhabitants of Chartres have combined to aid in the construction of their church by transporting the materials; our Lord has rewarded their humble

³ "The religious observance of this sacred institution at the Chartres cathedral is only begun."

⁴ "Finally throughout almost all Normandy it has gained strength and affected individual places dedicated chiefly to the Mother of Mercy."

zeal by miracles which have roused the Normans to imitate the piety of their neighbours. . . . Since then the faithful of our diocese and of other neighbouring regions have formed associations for the same object; they admit no one into their company unless he has been to confession, has renounced enmities and revenges, and has reconciled himself with his enemies. That done, they elect a chief, under whose direction they conduct their waggons in silence and with humility.

The quarries at Berchères-l'Évêque are about five miles from Chartres. The stone is excessively hard, and was cut in blocks of considerable size, as you can see for yourselves; blocks which required great effort to transport and lay in place. The work was done with feverish rapidity, as it still shows, but it is the solidest building of the age, and without a sign of weakness yet. The Abbot told, with more surprise than pride, of the spirit which was built into the cathedral with the stone:—

Who has ever seen!—Who has ever heard tell, in times past, that powerful princes of the world, that men brought up in honour and in wealth, that nobles, men and women, have bent their proud and haughty necks to the harness of carts, and that, like beasts of burden, they have dragged to the abode of Christ these waggons, loaded with wines, grains, oil, stone, wood, and all that was necessary for the wants of life, or for the construction of the church? But while they draw these burdens, there is one thing admirable to observe; it is that often when a thousand persons and more are attached to the chariots—so great is the difficulty—yet they march in such silence that not a murmur is heard, and truly if one did not see the thing with one's eyes, one might believe that among such a multitude there was hardly a person present. When they halt on the road, nothing is heard but the confession of sins, and pure and suppliant prayer to God to obtain pardon. At the voice of the priests who exhort their hearts to peace, they forget all hatred, discord is thrown far aside, debts are remitted, the unity of hearts is established.

But if any one is so far advanced in evil as to be unwilling to pardon an offender, or if he rejects the counsel of the priest who has piously advised him, his offering is instantly thrown from the waggon as impure, and he himself ignominiously and shamefully excluded from the society of the holy. There one sees the priests who preside over each chariot exhort every one to penitence, to confession of faults, to the resolution of better life! There one sees old people, young people, little children, calling on God with suppliant voice, and uttering to Him, from the

depth of the heart, sobs and sighs with words of glory and praise! After the people, warned by the sound of trumpets and the sight of banners, have resumed their road, the march is made with such ease that no obstacle can retard it. . . . When they have reached the church they arrange the waggons about it like a spiritual camp, and during the whole night they celebrate the watch by hymns and canticles. On each waggon they light tapers and lamps; they place there the infirm and sick, and bring them the precious relics of the Saints for their relief. Afterwards the priests and clerics close the ceremony by processions which the people follow with devout heart, imploring the clemency of the Lord and of his Blessed Mother for the recovery of the sick.

Of course, the Virgin was actually and constantly present during all this labour, and gave her assistance to it, but you would get no light on the architecture from listening to an account of her miracles, nor do they heighten the effect of popular faith. Without the conviction of her personal presence, men would not have been inspired; but, to us, it is rather the inspiration of the art which proves the Virgin's presence, and we can better see the conviction of it in the work than in the words. Every day, as the work went on, the Virgin was present, directing the architects, and it is this direction that we are going to study, if you have now got a realizing sense of what it meant. Without this sense, the church is dead. Most persons of a deeply religious nature would tell you emphatically that nine churches out of ten actually were dead-born, after the thirteenth century, and that church architecture became a pure matter of mechanism and mathematics; but that is a question for you to decide when you come to it; and the pleasure consists not in seeing the death, but in feeling the life. - - -

CHAPTER XIII. LES MIRACLES DE NOTRE DAME

- - - True it was, although one should not say it jestingly, that the Virgin embarrassed the Trinity; and perhaps this was the reason, behind all the other excellent reasons, why men loved and adored her with a passion such as no other deity has ever inspired: and why we, although utter strangers to her, are not far from getting down on our knees and praying to her still. Mary concentrated in herself the whole rebellion of man against fate; the whole protest against divine law; the whole contempt for human law as its outcome; the whole unutterable fury of hu-

man nature beating itself against the walls of its prison-house, and suddenly seized by a hope that in the Virgin man had found a door of escape. She was above law; she took feminine pleasure in turning hell into an ornament; she delighted in trampling on every social distinction in this world and the next. She knew that the universe was as unintelligible to her, on any theory of morals, as it was to her worshippers, and she felt, like them, no sure conviction that it was any more intelligible to the Creator of it. To her, every suppliant was a universe in itself, to be judged apart, on his own merits, by his love for her,—by no means on his orthodoxy, or his conventional standing in the Church, or according to his correctness in defining the nature of the Trinity. The convulsive hold which Mary to this day maintains over human imagination—as you can see at Lourdes—was due much less to her power of saving soul or body than to her sympathy with people who suffered under law,—divine or human,—justly or unjustly, by accident or design, by decree of God or by guile of Devil. She cared not a straw for conventional morality, and she had no notion of letting her friends be punished, to the tenth or any other generation, for the sins of their ancestors or the pécadilloes of Eve.

So Mary filled heaven with a sort of persons little to the taste of any respectable middle-class society, which has trouble enough in making this world decent and pay its bills, without having to continue the effort in another. Mary stood in a Church of her own, so independent that the Trinity might have perished without much affecting her position; but, on the other hand, the Trinity could look on and see her dethroned with almost a breath of relief. Aucassins and the devils of Gaultier de Coincy foresaw her danger. Mary's treatment of respectable and law-abiding people who had no favours to ask, and were reasonably confident of getting to heaven by the regular judgment, without expense, rankled so deeply that three hundred years later the Puritan reformers were not satisfied with abolishing her, but sought to abolish the woman altogether as the cause of all evil in heaven and on earth. The Puritans abandoned the New Testament and the Virgin in order to go back to the beginning, and renew the quarrel with Eve. This is the Church's affair, not ours, and the women are competent to settle it with Church or State,

without help from outside; but honest tourists are seriously interested in putting the feeling back into the dead architecture where it belongs.

Mary was rarely harsh to any suppliant or servant, and she took no special interest in humiliating the rich or the learned or the wise. For them, law was made; by them, law was administered; and with their doings Mary never arbitrarily interfered; but occasionally she could not resist the temptation to intimate her opinion of the manner in which the Trinity allowed their—the regular—Church to be administered. She was a queen, and never for an instant forgot it, but she took little thought about her divine rights, if she had any,—and in fact Saint Bernard preferred her without them,—while she was scandalized at the greed of officials in her Son's Court. One day a rich usurer and a very poor old woman happened to be dying in the same town. Gaultier de Coincy did not say, as an accurate historian should, that he was present, nor did he mention names or dates, although it was one of his longest and best stories. Mary never loved bankers, and had no reason for taking interest in this one, or for doing him injury; but it happened that the parish priest was summoned to both deathbeds at the same time, and neglected the old pauper in the hope of securing a bequest for his church from the banker. This was the sort of fault that most annoyed Mary in the Church of the Trinity, which, in her opinion, was not cared for as it should be, and she felt it her duty to intimate as much. - - -

[*When the priest's clerk goes to administer the last sacrament to the old woman, he finds the Virgin there before him.*]

The rest of the story concerned the usurer, whose death-bed was of a different character, but Mary's interest in death-beds of that kind was small. The fate of the usurer mattered the less because she knew too well how easily the banker,

in good credit, could arrange with the officials of the Trinity to open the doors of paradise for him. The administration of heaven was very like the administration of France; the Queen Mother saw many things of which she could not wholly approve; but her nature was pity, not justice, and she shut her eyes to much that she could not change. Her miracles, therefore, were for the most part mere evidence of her pity for those who needed it most, and these were rarely the well-to-do people of the siècle, but more commonly the helpless. Every saint performed miracles, and these are standard, not peculiar to any one intermediary; and every saint protected his own friends; but beyond these exhibitions of power, which are more or less common to the whole hierarchy below the Trinity, Mary was the mother of pity and the only hope of despair. One might go on for a volume, studying the character of Mary and the changes that time made in it, from the earliest Byzantine legends down to the daily recorded miracles at Lourdes; no character in history has had so long or varied a development, and none so sympathetic; but the greatest poets long ago plundered that mine of rich motives, and have stolen what was most dramatic for popular use. The Virgin's most famous early miracle seems to have been that of the monk Theophilus, which was what one might call her salvation of Faust. Another Byzantine miracle was an original version of Shylock. Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists plundered the Church legends as freely as their masters plundered the Church treasures, yet left a mass of dramatic material untouched. Let us pray the Virgin that it may remain untouched, for, although a good miracle was in its day worth much money,—so much that the rival shrines stole each other's miracles without decency,—one does not care to see one's Virgin put to money-making for Jew theatre-managers. - - -